

San Francisco Planning Department

# **525 GOLDEN GATE AVENUE CITY ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING**

*Draft Environmental Impact Report*

1997.478E

Draft EIR Publication Date: September 23, 2000

Draft EIR Public Hearing Date: October 26, 2000

Draft EIR Public Comment Period: September 23 to November 7, 2000

*Comments should be sent to:*

*Environmental Review Officer  
1660 Mission Street, Suite 500  
San Francisco, CA 94103*

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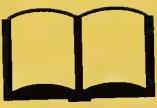
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# PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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DATE: September 23, 2000

TO: Distribution List for the 525 Golden Gate Avenue (City Administrative Building)  
Project Draft EIR

FROM: Hillary Gitelman, Environmental Review Officer

SUBJECT: Request for the Final Environmental Impact Report for the 525 Golden Gate Avenue  
Project (Case No. 97.478E)

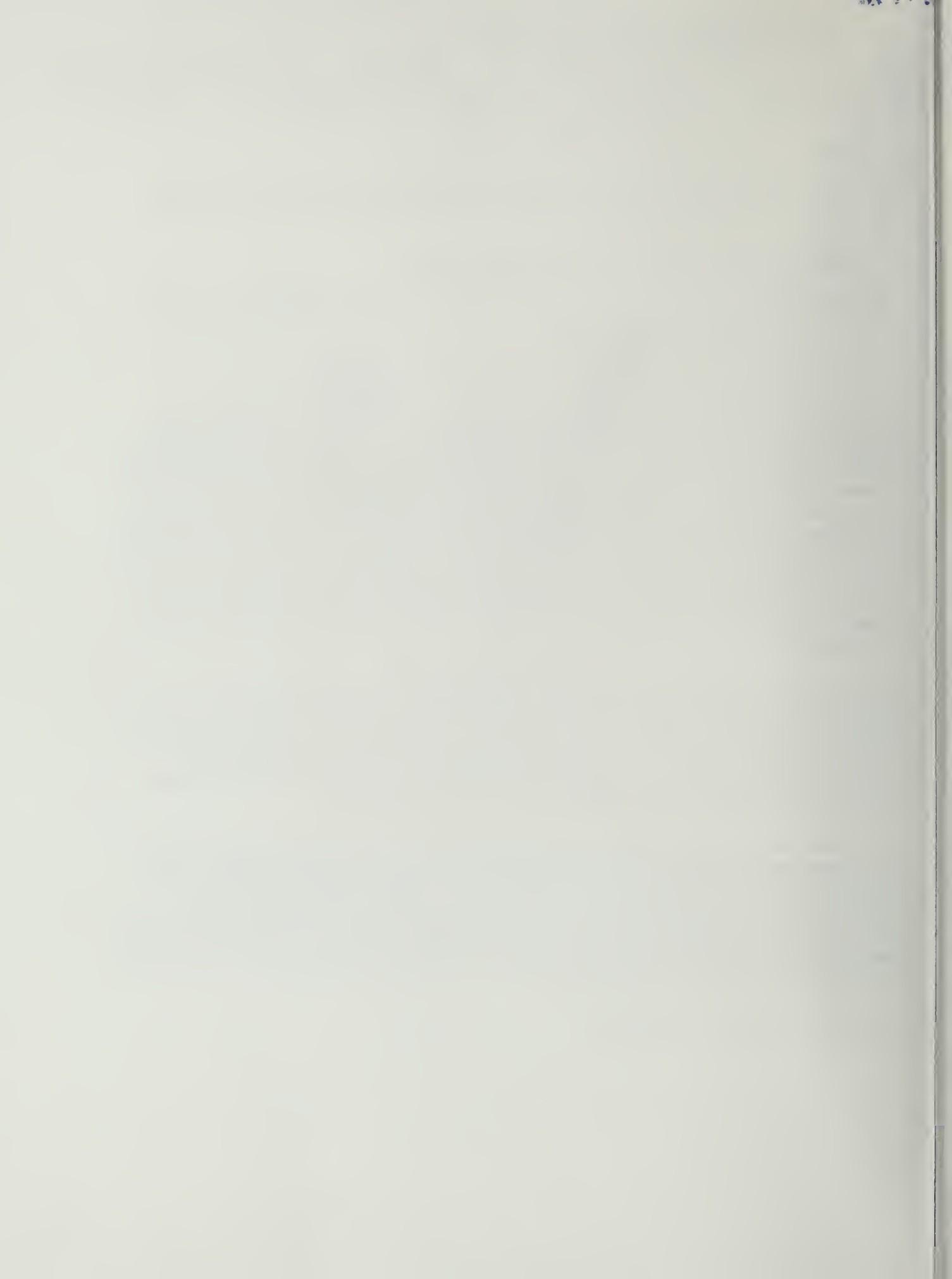
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This is the Draft of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the 525 Golden Gate Avenue (City Administrative Building) Project. A public hearing will be held on the adequacy and accuracy of this document. After the public hearing, our office will prepare and publish a document titled "Summary of Comments and Responses" which will contain a summary of all relevant comments on this Draft EIR and our responses to those comments, and may also specify changes to this Draft EIR. Public agencies and members of the public who testify at the hearing on the Draft EIR will automatically receive a copy of the Comments and Responses document, along with notice of the date reserved for certification of the EIR by the Planning Commission; others may receive such copies and notice on request or by visiting our office. This Draft EIR together with the Summary of Comments and Responses document will be considered by the Planning Commission in an advertised public meeting and certified as a Final EIR if deemed adequate.

After certification, we will modify the Draft EIR as specified by the Comments and Responses document and print both documents in a single publication called the Final Environmental Impact Report. The Final EIR will add no new information to the combination of the two documents except to reproduce the certification resolution. It will simply provide the information in one document rather than two documents. Therefore, if you receive a copy of the Comments and Responses document in addition to this copy of the Draft EIR, you will technically have a copy of the Final EIR.

We are aware that many people who receive the Draft EIR and Summary of Comments and Responses have no interest in receiving virtually the same information after the EIR has been certified. To avoid expending money and paper needlessly, we would like to send copies of the Final EIR to private individuals only if they request them. If you would like a copy of the Final EIR, therefore, please fill out and mail the postcard provided inside the back cover to the Major Environmental Analysis Office of the Planning Department within two weeks after certification of the EIR. Any private party not requesting a Final EIR by that time will not be mailed a copy.

Thank you for your interest in this project.



San Francisco Planning Department

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# **CHAPTER I**

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## **SUMMARY**

### **A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION (p. 15)**

At the southwest corner of Polk Street and Golden Gate Avenue, in the San Francisco Civic Center, the project would involve demolition of an existing vacant State of California office building and construction of a new building for City offices. Two options are under consideration: Option A would entail construction of a 14-story, 181-foot-tall building containing about 255,500 square feet of office space, while Option B would consist of a 12-story, 156-foot-tall building with about 215,000 square feet. Each option would include two basement parking levels containing about 100 spaces (corresponding to about 140 spaces with valet operations). The project would support up to approximately 950 City employees, most of whom are expected to be relocated from existing leased office space elsewhere in the greater Civic Center.

The project would include a height reclassification (amendment of the height and bulk designations in the zoning maps and General Plan maps) of the site to accommodate the proposed building, and the project will also seek a variance from the Planning Code requirement for on-site parking and loading. The project would include one loading space to accommodate vans and small trucks at a loading dock on Redwood Street and the above-noted 100 parking spaces, instead of the two loading spaces and 430 parking spaces required (Planning Code Sections 151 and 152). The project would include at least 32 to 37 bicycle parking spaces, depending on the option approved (Sec. 155.1) and at least four showers and eight clothes lockers (Sec. 155.3).

The proposed City Administrative Building would be a steel-frame structure clad in panels of masonry and/or stone and glass and intended to be compatible with other public buildings in the Civic Center. Based on preliminary design work, the new building is anticipated to be constructed in a generally rectangular shape at levels one through 12 (for Option A) (or levels one through 10 for Option B), to a height of 155 feet (130 feet) above Golden Gate Avenue. The 13th story (11th story for Option B) would be set back from Golden Gate Avenue to limit new shadow on the Tenderloin Community School one block to the north, and would reach 168 feet (143 feet for Option B) in height. The partial mechanical story (14th for Option A, 12th for Option B) would be set back on three sides – from Polk Street, Golden Gate Avenue, and the western property line – and would rise to 181 feet (156 feet for Option B). A 10-foot tall elevator penthouse would be situated near the southern edge of the roof. The preliminary design also indicates a slightly curved facade in the center portion of levels three through 12 (for Option A) (levels three through 10 for Option B) that would echo the curved facade of the new State Office Building across Polk Street. The main pedestrian entrance would be on Golden Gate Avenue,

near the corner of Polk Street. The proposed project is anticipated to be constructed pursuant to a pilot program for the design and construction of new Resource-Efficient City Buildings (the “Green Building” ordinance) approved by the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor in 1999.

Demolition of the existing building is anticipated to last approximately four months, beginning in early 2001. Construction of the new office building would take approximately 20 months. Occupancy is anticipated by late 2003. The project is anticipated to be executed through a design-build process, meaning that the City would select a single team to complete the final design and construct the building. Therefore, the final design is subject to change, particularly as concerns architectural details. The design-build process is subject to final approval by the Board of Supervisors and the mayor.

Following certification of the EIR, the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission would be asked to approve a General Plan Amendment for changes to the Urban Design Element Height and Bulk maps and rezoning of the site to change the Height and Bulk District of the entire site from 130-E to 200-L or 160-L allow for construction of the project. Because the project would be a public building constructed on City-owned land, the Art Commission has authority to approve the building design. The Planning Commission would also be asked to consider a General Plan referral for conformity with the General Plan for demolition of existing building and construction of the project. The project would require demolition and construction permits from the Department of Building Inspection and a variance from the Zoning Administrator for providing less than the Planning Code-required amount of parking and loading. No building permit applications have been filed to date.

## **B. MAIN ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

This environmental impact report, for the 525 Golden Gate Avenue project, focuses on the issues of visual quality, transportation, shadow, and wind. All other potential environmental effects were found to be at a less-than-significant level or to be mitigated to a less-than-significant level with mitigation measures to be implemented by the project sponsor. (Please see the Initial Study, included in this document as Appendix A, for analysis of other environmental issues.) In addition, this environmental impact report discusses land use for informational purposes, although effects related to land use were found to be less-than-significant in the Initial Study.

### **LAND USE(p. 24)**

The Civic Center is a central area for governmental and cultural activity. Other land uses include private offices, retail, restaurant, and residential uses. The project site was occupied by state government offices until shortly after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Nearby uses include the new Civic Center Courthouse to the south, with City Hall beyond; the State of California complex to the east; and the Phillip Burton Federal Building to the northeast. Retail uses and offices are north and west of the site, and the new Tenderloin Community (elementary) school is one block northeast. The proposed project, a new building containing approximately 215,000 to 255,500 square feet of City offices and about

50,000 square feet of parking, would result in an increase in intensity of land uses on the project site and in the vicinity, given that the existing building is vacant. However, the project would not alter the general land use pattern of the immediate area, which includes numerous government office buildings noted above. As a reintroduction of government office use on the site, the project would be compatible with existing nearby uses, notably the Civic Center location of government offices and related government functions. The project also would not disrupt or divide the neighborhood, since it would be developed within the existing block configuration. Therefore, effects related to land use would not be significant.

## VISUAL QUALITY (p. 30)

The new City Administrative Building would be up to about 181 feet tall (for Option A; 156 feet tall for Option B), plus a 10-foot elevator penthouse. A preliminary design prepared by the Bureau of Architecture of the Department of Public Works depicts the new building as generally rectangular in shape. The preliminary design includes a setback from the north (Golden Gate Avenue) facade at the uppermost office story, and a partial top story containing mechanical equipment. The preliminary design also shows the new building with a slightly curved façade on the south (Redwood Street) side, echoing one of the major elements of the new state office building across Polk Street. Because the project would be executed through a design-build process, the design, in particular with regard to architectural detailing, is subject to change once the City selects a development team. However, the massing would be expected to remain largely as portrayed.

The preliminary design emphasizes a classical three-part vertical composition (base, middle, and top). The base would be clad in masonry on all three street facades, linking the building's design with other public structures in the Civic Center. The new building would exceed the 130-foot height limit for the site and would therefore require amendment of the zoning maps and General Plan Urban Design Element height and bulk maps. However, under Option B – the shorter of the two proposals – the street wall height along Golden Gate Avenue would be maintained at 130 feet. Under Option A, the Golden Gate Avenue street wall would reach a height of 155 feet.

The proposed building would appear as a major new visual element in the Civic Center, but would not block public views of the Bay, hills, or other regional landmarks, nor would it obscure important architectural resources in the Civic Center. In views from the Plaza towards the site and City Hall, City Hall and its 300-foot dome would remain as a major visual landmark. The proposed project would be constructed on the edge of the Civic Center, just outside of the local historic district that is listed in Article 10 of the Planning Code and also outside of two separate districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. However, the project would not fundamentally alter the relationship of the buildings within these historic districts, which are unified around the theme of maintaining the visual prominence of City Hall. Given the project sponsor's intention to use exterior materials that are compatible with other public buildings in the Civic Center, the new building would be compatible at its base with other major government structures.

Depending on the option approved, the main mass of the City Administrative Building (excluding the upper mechanical floor) would be between about 15 and 40 feet shorter than the new State Office Building across Polk Street (approximately 185 feet tall at the street wall parapet and 205 feet tall at the mechanical penthouse). In comparison to the newly-constructed San Francisco Civic Center Courthouse across Redwood Street (about 85 feet to the parapet and 100 feet to the dome at the corner of Polk and McAllister Streets), Option A would be nearly twice the height, while Option B would be about two-thirds again as tall as the Courthouse. When viewed from Civic Center Plaza, the height of the new building would be accentuated in comparison to the Courthouse, owing to the increase in elevation northward on Polk Street. The new building would also be taller than the base of City Hall, which is approximately 75 feet tall at the corner of Polk and McAllister Streets.

Because the new City Adminstrative Building would be constructed at the perimeter of the Civic Center, across the street from the two tallest existing buildings in the vicinity and half a block from the towers of Opera Plaza, and because the building would not alter the fundamental relationship between the major Civic Center buildings and City Hall, the project would not be out of scale with surrounding development, nor would it adversely affect the adjacent historic districts. Therefore, the impact would not be significant. Changes in the design that might occur as part of the design-build process would not likely change the development program (e.g., square footage of office space and number of workers), and therefore would not be expected to result in effects substantially different than described herein.

## TRANSPORTATION (p. 46)

Two development scenarios were examined for estimation of project travel demand for each of the two project options, *i.e.*, City departments housed at the site either would or would not include high visitor level activity (such as departments that routinely provide on-site services to the public). The number of daily person-trips would range from a low of approximately 3,600 (for Option B, assuming low visitor activity departments would occupy the building) to a high of about 4,800 (for Option A, assuming high visitor activity departments would occupy the building). The project would generate between about 1,580 and 2,120 daily vehicle trips, depending on the option approved and the scenario assumed, and between about 215 and 265 vehicle trips in the p.m. peak hour. Transit ridership in the p.m. peak hour would be between about 250 and 305, depending on the option and scenario.

All of the five signalized study intersections currently operate at Level of Service (LOS) C or better (low to moderate delays) during the p.m. peak hour, which is good to very good operating conditions. With the addition of project trips, operating conditions at the study intersections would not worsen from existing conditions, except at the intersection of Van Ness and Golden Gate Avenues, where the service level would drop from LOS C to LOS D under all scenarios. However, LOS D is considered to be acceptable operations in San Francisco, and therefore this would not result in a significant effect.

Under 2015 cumulative conditions, p.m. peak-hour traffic conditions at the intersection of Van Ness Avenue / Golden Gate Avenue would degrade to an unacceptable LOS E under all scenarios. This would

be a significant cumulative impact, to which the project would contribute considerably. A potential mitigation measure, conversion of Redwood Street to one-way eastbound traffic flow, has been identified (see p. 72) that would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. Conditions at other study intersections would not worsen from Year 2000 Without Project conditions with the addition of traffic from the built-out project, and would operate at LOS D or better.

The project would generate between about 250 and 305 p.m. peak-hour transit trips, which would incrementally increase p.m. peak-period capacity utilization of MUNI lines in the area, but not to the degree that level of service standards would be exceeded because the riders would be dispersed among the various lines (there are more than 125 buses and streetcars on the lines serving the project area in the p.m. peak hour). Addition of project riders to regional transit carriers would not be measurable against the day-to-day fluctuations in transit ridership, and no project-specific significant effect would result. The project would contribute to cumulative increases in transit ridership that would result in a marginal increase in loading ratios. However, the project contribution would not be “considerable” (about 15 riders per line, averaged over the 20 nearby MUNI lines), and the project effect therefore would not be significant.

Regarding parking, the project would create a demand for between 345 and 430 parking spaces, depending on the development option and the level of visitors assumed. With 100 off-street parking spaces (up to 140 spaces with valet operations), the project would result in an unmet demand of about 255 to 290 parking spaces for Option A, or 205 to 235 spaces for Option B, depending on the visitor activity. Based on existing parking availability (some 165 nearby off-street spaces not occupied in the project vicinity), project demand would occupy any remaining vacant spaces in nearby off-street parking facilities, and would result in a deficit of between 40 and 125 spaces in the vicinity, assuming no change in travel modal split (e.g., from auto to transit). This parking space deficit would result in drivers that come to the area parking farther away from their destination, would cause an increase in illegal on-street parking, or would cause parkers to change travel modes. The deficit could also encourage operators of existing parking facilities, such as the Civic Center Plaza Garage and the Opera Plaza Garage, to consider the use of valet parking to increase the available supply, at least during periods of peak demand. A long-term effect of the parking deficit would be to discourage auto use and encourage use of local transit. San Francisco General Plan policies emphasize the importance of public transit use and discourage the provision of facilities that encourage automobile use to minimize the environmental impact of traffic congestion, noise, and air quality associated with unconstrained vehicle use. Therefore, the creation of or increase in parking demand resulting from a proposed project that cannot be met by existing or proposed parking facilities, while inconvenient to persons choosing to drive to the area, would not be considered a significant effect.

The project sponsor would seek a variance from the Planning Code parking requirement to provide 100 spaces instead of the up to 465 spaces required (depending on the development option approved). The building would contain disabled parking and bicycle parking, and showers and lockers in compliance with Planning Code requirements.

The proposed project would provide one loading dock for vans and small trucks off Redwood Street, which would meet the average and peak demand for about one loading space per hour, assuming delivery/service calls were made by van-type vehicles. To the extent full-size trucks were used, delivery/service vehicles would seek on-street space on Golden Gate Avenue and Polk Street. The project sponsor would seek a variance from the Planning Code requirement for the minimum number of off-street spaces (two would be required).

In general, while the design of the proposed City Administrative Building is subject to some revision as part of the design-build process, no changes to the development program (e.g., square footage of office space and number of workers) are expected that would result in effects outside the range of impacts discussed in this section. In summary, therefore, the project would not result in a significant unmitigable impact on transportation, circulation or parking.

## SHADOW (p. 56)

The project could produce new shadow on Civic Center Plaza for 40 minutes or less for portions of the daily periods between about 7:10 p.m. and 7:35 p.m., from May 13 through June 21 each year. The new shadow cast on Civic Center Plaza by the project would fall on the northeast corner of the Plaza, including the northernmost portion of the Civic Center Tot Lot (playground). It would occur at the end of the day, during the last hour of the period covered by Planning Code Section 295 (that is, during the last hour before one hour prior to sunset), and would not exceed the Absolute Cumulative Limit for new shadow on the plaza. Because the new project shadow would be within the Absolute Cumulative Limit, and because the new project shadow would occur in the early evening, the additional shadow would not be expected to interfere with use of the Plaza, nor would it conflict with the qualitative criteria that, as noted, call for preservation of afternoon sun. Therefore, the project would not result in a significant effect regarding shadow.

The project would also cast new shadow on Tenderloin Community School, located on the block to the north of the project site. New shadow would affect the school play areas, which are located on the building roof and at street level on Elm Street, in the morning hours between early fall and late winter. The maximum project shadow on the new school would occur in December. At 9:00 a.m. on December 21 (the winter solstice), the shorter Option B would almost fully shade the rooftop play area on the school's west building, which is mostly in sunlight at that time under existing conditions. Option A, with two additional stories, would fully shade this play area. The east rooftop play area would remain in sunlight with Option B, but its westernmost approximately 35 feet would be shaded by Option A. (The ground-level play areas along Elm Street are shaded by existing buildings.) By 10:00 a.m., shadows would shorten sufficiently that neither option would cast new shadow on the rooftop play areas. Both options, however, would add new shadow to one or both of the ground-level play areas, which are partially shaded at present. By 12:00 noon, Option B would cast no new shadow on the school, while Option A would add a small amount of shadow (less than 500 square feet) to the eastern

portion of the east ground-level play area. Both rooftops and the remainder of the ground-level play areas would be in sunlight. Project-generated shadow at other times of the year would be less extensive.

The open spaces at the school are not subject to Planning Code Section 295. Therefore, project shadow would not be considered a significant effect. Further, the project would never result in complete shading of the school's outdoor open spaces and except for the early morning hours (9:00 a.m. and earlier) in late fall and early winter (around the first day of winter), when the taller Option A would result in near-complete shadow. Even in late fall and early winter, by 10:00 a.m., substantial areas of the school's open space would be in sunlight, and would remain in sunlight throughout the year. The project would cast new shadow, compared to existing conditions, on the newly renovated plaza at the Phillip Burton Federal Building during the afternoon hours year-round, except in late spring and early summer. Because this open space is not subject to Planning Code Section 295, this new shadow would not be considered a significant effect. Mitigation is identified in Chapter IV (see p. 73) to ensure that any changes to the building design would not result in shadow effects that would be substantially more adverse than identified herein.

## WIND (p. 68)

The project would incrementally increase wind speeds around and near the base of the new City Administrative Building, with the taller Option A resulting in incrementally more change in wind speeds. Wind speeds would increase with Option A by 4 mph at one location, by 3 mph at two locations, and by no more than 2 mph – which would be barely noticeable – at the other 28 locations tested. Option B would result in no increases greater than 2 mph. Option A would result in wind speeds exceeding the 11-mph pedestrian comfort criterion at 20 of 31 test points and Option B would result in 18 such exceedances, compared to 15 exceedances under existing conditions. Under both options, new exceedances would occur on the Golden Gate Avenue sidewalk at the northwest corner of the project site, on the north sidewalk of Redwood Street, and at two points on the east sidewalk of Polk Street, across the street from the project site. Option A would also result in three new pedestrian criterion exceedances, including the midpoint of the project's Golden Gate Avenue sidewalk (outside the proposed project entrance), one on the north sidewalk of Golden Gate Avenue near Polk Street, and a second on Redwood Street. Option B would result in an additional new exceedance at Polk and Redwood Street.

As under existing conditions, with each option there would be four exceedances of the 36-mph wind hazard criterion at the 31 test points. Both options would increase the number of hours during which the hazard criterion would be exceeded, from 518 hours at present to 568 hours with Option A and 626 hours with Option B. However, neither option would result in new exceedances of the hazard criterion at any of the 31 test points, and therefore the impact would be less than significant, assuming the design changes, if any, that result from the design-build process do not substantially alter the building envelope. Mitigation is identified in Chapter IV (see p. 73) to ensure that any changes to the building design would not result in wind effects that would be substantially more adverse than identified herein.

## C. AREAS OF CONTROVERSY AND ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

The primary areas of controversy surrounding the proposed project concern the height of the proposed City Administrative Building and potential shadow and wind effects, including shadow that the proposed project would cast on the Tenderloin Community School.

The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will decide whether to approve or disapprove the proposed project, including amendments of the Height and Bulk maps contained in the Planning Code and in the General Plan Urban Design Element, after review and certification of the EIR. In selecting or rejecting project alternatives, decision makers may also use other information in the public record.

As with all projects, the project design will continue to evolve as the sponsor makes refinements and receives input from the Planning Department and Planning Commission. The project is analyzed in this EIR at a level of analysis sufficiently broad to permit these refinements without necessarily triggering new environmental review, yet in sufficient detail to identify specific potential physical effects on the environment. Subsequent changes in the project will be evaluated to ensure that they would not cause new or substantially more severe environmental impacts.

## D. MITIGATION MEASURES (p. 71)

Measures required by law that would serve to mitigate potential significant impacts, such as limitation of construction-related noise levels pursuant to the City Noise Ordinance, compliance with Building Code work practices for lead paint removal, and observance of State and federal OSHA safety requirements related to handling and disposal of other hazardous materials, such as asbestos, are not included as mitigation measures.

### MEASURES PROPOSED AS PART OF THE PROJECT

#### *NOISE AND VIBRATION*

- A.1 If pile driving is required for the project foundation, the project sponsor will require that the project engineer include in foundation plans submitted to the Department of Building Inspection for review a requirement that piles be pre-drilled to the extent feasible, unless a soils report indicates that soil conditions are such that pre-drilling would reduce the effectiveness of the pile foundation.

#### *CONSTRUCTION AIR QUALITY*

- B.1 The project sponsor would require that the contractor(s) sprinkle exterior demolition sites with water during demolition, excavation and construction activity; sprinkle unpaved exterior construction areas with water at least twice per day; cover stockpiles of soil, sand, and other material; cover trucks hauling debris, soil, sand or other such material; and sweep surrounding streets during demolition and construction at least once per day to reduce particulate emissions. Ordinance 175-91, passed by the Board of Supervisors on May 6, 1991, requires that non-potable

water be used for dust control activities. Therefore, the project sponsor would require that the contractor(s) obtain reclaimed water from the Clean Water Program for this purpose.

## ***TRANSPORTATION***

- C.1 To mitigate cumulative (2015) conditions, the San Francisco Department of Parking and Traffic (DPT) would monitor traffic level of service (LOS) conditions at the Van Ness Avenue / Golden Gate Avenue intersection at a frequency of no less than every two years. At such time as warranted by traffic conditions (i.e., a degradation of the p.m. peak-hour service level to an unacceptable LOS E), DPT would shift some project traffic away from the Van Ness Avenue / Golden Gate Avenue intersection by converting Redwood Street to a one-way eastbound (from Van Ness Avenue to Polk Street) street (or implement another measure determined at that time to mitigate the cumulative degradation to LOS D or better).

## ***SHADOW***

- D.1 To ensure that shadow effects with respect to Civic Center Plaza and the Tenderloin Community School are not substantially greater than identified in the EIR, if the final design were to differ in height, setbacks, or massing from the design analyzed in this EIR, the design-build contractor shall complete a shadow study of the final project design prior to issuance of any building or site permits (exclusive of demolition permits for the existing building), should the Planning Department determine that the final design warrants such analysis. This analysis, if required, shall be submitted to the Planning Department for review prior to issuance of a building permit, and could be subject to further environmental review.

## ***WIND***

- E.1 To ensure that wind effects are not substantially greater than identified in the EIR, if the final design were to differ in height, setbacks, or massing from the design analyzed in this EIR, the design-build contractor shall complete a wind-tunnel analysis of the final project design prior to issuance of any building or site permits (exclusive of demolition permits for the existing building), should the Planning Department determine that the final design warrants such analysis. This analysis, if required, shall be submitted to the Planning Department for review prior to issuance of a building permit, and could be subject to further environmental review.

## ***HAZARDS***

- F.1 The project sponsor would ensure that building surveys for PCB-containing equipment (including elevator equipment), hydraulic oils, and fluorescent lights are performed prior to the start of demolition. Any hazardous materials so discovered would be abated according to federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

## ***CULTURAL RESOURCES***

- G.1 Given the archival history of the project site, the project sponsor would retain an historical archaeologist, who would be present during site excavation and would record observations in a permanent log. The Environmental Review Officer (ERO) would also require cooperation of the project sponsor in assisting such further investigations on site as may be appropriate prior to or during project excavation, even if this results in a delay in excavation activities.

Should archeological resources of potential significance be found during ground disturbance, the project sponsor would immediately notify the ERO and would suspend any excavation that the ERO determined might damage such archaeological resources. Excavation or construction activities that might damage discovered cultural resources would be suspended for a total maximum of four weeks over the course of construction.

The archaeologist would prepare a draft report containing an assessment of the potential significance of the find and recommendations for what measures should be implemented to minimize potential effects on archaeological resources. Based on this report, the ERO would recommend specific additional mitigation measures to be implemented by the project sponsor.

Mitigation measures might include a site security program, additional on-site investigations by the archaeologist, and/or documentation, preservation, and recovery of cultural materials. Finally, the archaeologist would prepare a draft report documenting the cultural resources that were discovered, an evaluation as to their significance, and a description as to how any archaeological testing, exploration and/or recovery program was conducted.

Copies of all draft reports prepared according to this mitigation measure would be sent first and directly to the ERO for review. Following approval by the ERO, copies of the final report(s) would be sent by the archaeologist directly to the President of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System. Three copies of the final archaeology report(s) shall be submitted to the Office of Environmental Review, accompanied by copies of the transmittals documenting its distribution to the President of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and the Northwest Information Center.

## E. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT (p. 76)

### ALTERNATIVE A: NO PROJECT

This alternative would entail no immediate change to the site, which would remain in its existing condition for the foreseeable future. The existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building would not be demolished, and no rezoning would occur. Under this alternative, the City might choose to sell the site, or might put forth another proposal for reuse of the existing building or redevelopment of the site.

Unless the site were reoccupied, there would be no temporary construction impacts, such as noise, dust and construction traffic, nor would there be any new travel to and from the site. This alternative would not result in any of the less-than-significant impacts related to shadow or wind that would occur with the proposed project, including the addition of new shadow to Civic Center Plaza, the Tenderloin Community School, and the Federal Building plaza, and changes in wind speeds. Also, this alternative would not affect views from Civic Center Plaza. Additionally, with this alternative, none of the impacts described in the Initial Study would occur. Conditions in the immediate future would be reflective of conditions described in the setting sections of this report. Because the 525 Golden Gate Avenue building sustained damage to its facade and interior in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the building would require a substantial amount of work prior to reoccupancy (see Alternative B), and it is possible that under the No Project Alternative, the building eventually would be demolished.

The No Project Alternative would be environmentally superior to the project, at least over the near term, because it would avoid the environmental impacts of the project, including less-than-significant impacts such as new shadow on Civic Center Plaza and on the Tenderloin Community School; however, the proposed project would not generate any significant unavoidable environmental effects since it would include mitigation measures to avoid significant effects.

## ALTERNATIVE B: REHABILITATION OF EXISTING BUILDING

This alternative would rehabilitate and reuse the existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building for City offices. No on-site parking would be provided. This alternative would provide an office building of about 184,000 square feet, compared to 215,000 to 255,500 square feet (excluding parking) with the proposed project. No rezoning would be required with this alternative, unlike the proposed project. Based on a 1995 State analysis, the existing building would have to undergo required seismic retrofit and full hazardous materials abatement. Included would be: soils stabilization; seismic bracing systems; asbestos removal; rehabilitation of the floors and roof structures, and replacement of roofing material; replacement of the exterior cladding for maximizing energy efficiency; installation of new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems; replacement of partitions, core finishes, plumbing, and sprinklers; and associated tenant improvements.

Because this alternative would entail office development at a lesser intensity than that proposed with the project, effects related to the intensity of development, such as transportation and air quality impacts, would be less intensive than with the project. However, all such impacts of the project would be less than significant. This alternative, however, would result in a greater on-site parking shortfall – up to about 330 spaces, compared to up to about 290 spaces with the proposed project, because, while parking demand would be less, this alternative would provide no on-site parking. As with the project, this shortfall would exceed the available off-street parking supply in the vicinity. Effects related to the project massing would not occur with this alternative, since the existing building would be reused. Thus, this alternative would cast no additional shadow on Civic Center Plaza, the Tenderloin Community School or the Federal Building plaza, nor would it result in the project's increase in the duration of wind hazard exceedances at the locations tested. This alternative also would not change views from Civic Center Plaza. Generation of noise and vibration during construction and rehabilitation would be less intensive than with the proposed project. Other construction-related effects, such as the potential discovery of subsurface cultural resources during excavation, would not occur with this alternative.

## ALTERNATIVE C: PROJECT WITH NO PARKING

This alternative would be similar to the project, except that no on-site parking would be provided. Instead of two levels of parking and loading below the grade of Golden Gate Avenue, this alternative would include 50,000 square feet of additional program space on the two subgrade levels (one of which would be at grade on Redwood Street, as with the proposed project), for a total of up to 325,000 square feet. Some of this additional space could be used for City offices, while other space, particularly in the

basement level, might be used for telecommunications equipment, a City document production (photocopying and printing) shop, and other uses that do not normally require natural light.

The most substantive difference in impacts, compared to those with the proposed project, would be related to the fact that this alternative would not include parking on site. With no on-site parking, this alternative, like the Rehabilitation Alternative, would result in a greater on-site parking shortfall – up to about 450 spaces, compared to up to about 290 spaces with the proposed project. As with the project, this shortfall would exceed the available off-street parking supply in the vicinity. Unlike the project, and because it would include no on-site parking, this alternative would not contribute considerably to a cumulative traffic impact at the intersection of Van Ness and Golden Gate Avenues. Other impacts related to the intensity of development would be similar to those of the proposed project. With increased floor area, compared to the proposed project, trip generation would be incrementally greater than that of the project. However, at least some of the additional space would have low employee density, and the change would not result in any new significant impacts.

Effects related to the footprint and mass of the building, including effects on shadow and wind and construction-related impacts, would be the same as those of the proposed project (depending on the development option approved), because essentially the same structure would be built. Other less-than-significant effects described in the Initial Study, including the potential discovery of subsurface cultural resources during excavation, would occur similarly with this alternative as with the project.

#### ALTERNATIVE D: HEIGHT AND BULK LIMIT COMPLIANCE

Under this alternative, a new City Administrative Building would be constructed on the project site but within the existing height and bulk limits of the site, which is within a 130-E Height and Bulk District. Therefore, unlike the proposed project, this alternative would not require rezoning. The City Administrative Building constructed under this alternative would be a five-story building covering the entire site, with an additional five-story tower at the southwestern portion of the project site. This alternative would contain about 155,000 square feet, and would include approximately 50 on-site parking spaces (about 70 spaces with valet operations). Assuming construction of a building of maximum feasible usable space, this alternative could provide approximately the same occupied floor area as is contained in the existing vacant building at 525 Golden Gate Avenue.

Effects related to the intensity of development would be similar to those of the Rehabilitation Alternative. That is, these impacts would be less intensive than with the project, as trip generation would be 30 to 40 percent less than with the project. Like the Rehabilitation Alternative, this alternative would result in less-than-significant traffic impacts. Because it would have less on-site parking than would the project, this alternative would not contribute considerably to a significant (mitigable) cumulative impact on traffic operations at the Van Ness Avenue / Golden Gate Avenue intersection. Other less-than-significant impacts of the project, such as those related to air quality, would also be less intensive under this alternative than with the project. This alternative would result in an on-site parking shortfall of up to

about 220 spaces, compared to up to about 290 spaces with the project. As with the project, this shortfall would exceed the available off-street parking supply in the vicinity.

Effects related to the footprint and mass of the building would be different than those of the project, because the City Administrative Building constructed under this alternative would have a street wall of 65 feet, half or less of the project's street wall height, depending on the development option approved, and about 30 feet less than the existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building. Because of its five-story upper tower, this alternative would cast new shadow on the Tenderloin Community School compared to existing conditions, but would affect less of the school grounds than would the proposed project, and only during late fall and early winter. Wind effects of this alternative would also be different. Because the Federal Building tends to control the wind environment in the vicinity, this alternative would not eliminate existing exceedances of the hazard criterion. However, with a lower street wall height than the proposed project and the existing building on the site, this alternative would result in some incremental decreases in wind speeds around the base of the new building. Generally, wind effects would be similar to those of project Option B (the shorter, 12-story project option). In views from Civic Center Plaza, this alternative would be largely obscured by the new Courthouse, as is the case with the existing building.

Other less-than-significant effects described in the Initial Study, including generation of noise and vibration during construction and potential discovery of subsurface cultural resources during excavation, among other impacts, would occur in a similar fashion with this alternative to those with the project.

The Height and Bulk Limit Compliance Alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative because it would result in incrementally less substantial operational impacts on traffic and air quality than would the project (although project impacts would not be significant) and would reduce the proposed project's less-than-significant impact of new shadow on the Tenderloin Community School. As noted in Chapters IV and V, the proposed project would not generate any significant unavoidable environmental effects that could not be mitigated.

## ALTERNATIVE E: OFF-SITE ALTERNATIVE

An off-site alternative location has been identified within the Civic Center, on the opposite side of City Hall from the proposed project site. The off-site alternative would be constructed at the corner of Hayes and Polk Streets, across Lech Walesa (Ivy) Street from the Department of Public Health building. This alternative would be nine stories tall (about 120 feet) and would decrease to seven or eight stories (91 to 104 feet) along Lech Walesa (Ivy) Street to minimize the shadow cast on Civic Center Plaza. It would occupy the eastern portion of the half-block between Lech Walesa and Hayes Streets, essentially in mirror image, relative to City Hall, to the project site. This alternative would occupy a larger footprint than the project, extending about 275 feet west of Polk Street, compared to about 180 feet for the proposed project. The alternative site's height and shadow constraints would limit the size of the building to approximately 267,000 square feet of gross floor area, similar to Option B of the proposed project. About 150 parking spaces would be provided (about 210 spaces with valet operations). This

alternative would require that the City acquire and demolish the existing California State Automobile Association diagnostic clinic and parking garage building on Hayes Street. No rezoning or General Plan amendment for height would be required.

Effects related to the intensity of development would be similar to those of the project. Trip generation would be essentially the same as with Option B of the project, but the changed location would result in traffic effects being focused on different intersections. Less-than-significant “operational” impacts of the project, such as those related to air quality, would essentially be the same under this alternative to those with the project. This alternative would result in the same parking demand as that of the project, but less of an on-site shortfall – up to about 220 spaces, compared to up to about 295 spaces with the project, because of the greater on-site parking supply. As with the project, this shortfall would exceed the available off-street parking supply in the vicinity.

Effects related to the footprint and mass of the building would be different than those of the project, because of the different location. As with the project options, this alternative would cast shadow on Civic Center Plaza, but not in excess of the Absolute Cumulative Limit; shadow from this alternative would occur at the southern portion of the plaza, near the center of the block between Polk and Larkin Streets, and only in late fall and early winter. This alternative would not cast shadow on the Tenderloin Community School. Wind effects would be similar to those of the two project options, in that the alternative site, like the project site, is in a windy area, where ground-level winds are and will continue to be dominated by other, taller buildings, including Fox Plaza at Polk and Market Streets and the CSAA tower at Fell Street and Van Ness Avenue.

Other less-than-significant effects described in the Initial Study, including generation of noise and vibration during construction and potential discovery of subsurface cultural resources during excavation, among other impacts, would occur in a similar fashion with this alternative to those with the project.

According to the project sponsor, the cost of this alternative would be substantially greater than that of the proposed project due to site acquisition costs.

# **CHAPTER II**

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

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### **A. SITE LOCATION**

The project site is at the southwest corner of Polk Street and Golden Gate Avenue, on the northeast corner of the block bounded by Polk Street on the east, McAllister Street on the south, Van Ness Avenue on the west, and Golden Gate Avenue on the north (see Figure 1). That block is divided by Redwood Street; the site would occupy the easternmost lot in the half-block north of Redwood Street. The approximately 22,000-square-foot site consists of Lot 1 in Assessor's Block 766, and is currently occupied by a seven-story office building, formerly used by the State of California, that has been vacant since shortly after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.<sup>1</sup> The site is within a P (Public) Use District and a 130-E (130-foot height limit, bulk limits above 65 feet) Height and Bulk District. There is no Floor Area Ratio (FAR) limit in a P District. The site is immediately adjacent to two historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places and to the local Civic Center Historic District, listed in Article 10 of the City Planning Code; each of these three districts extends along the southern boundary of the project site on Redwood Street. The site is adjacent on the west to the Van Ness Avenue Special Use District, and is one block west of the North of Market Residential Special Use District. The site is currently owned by the City and County of San Francisco.

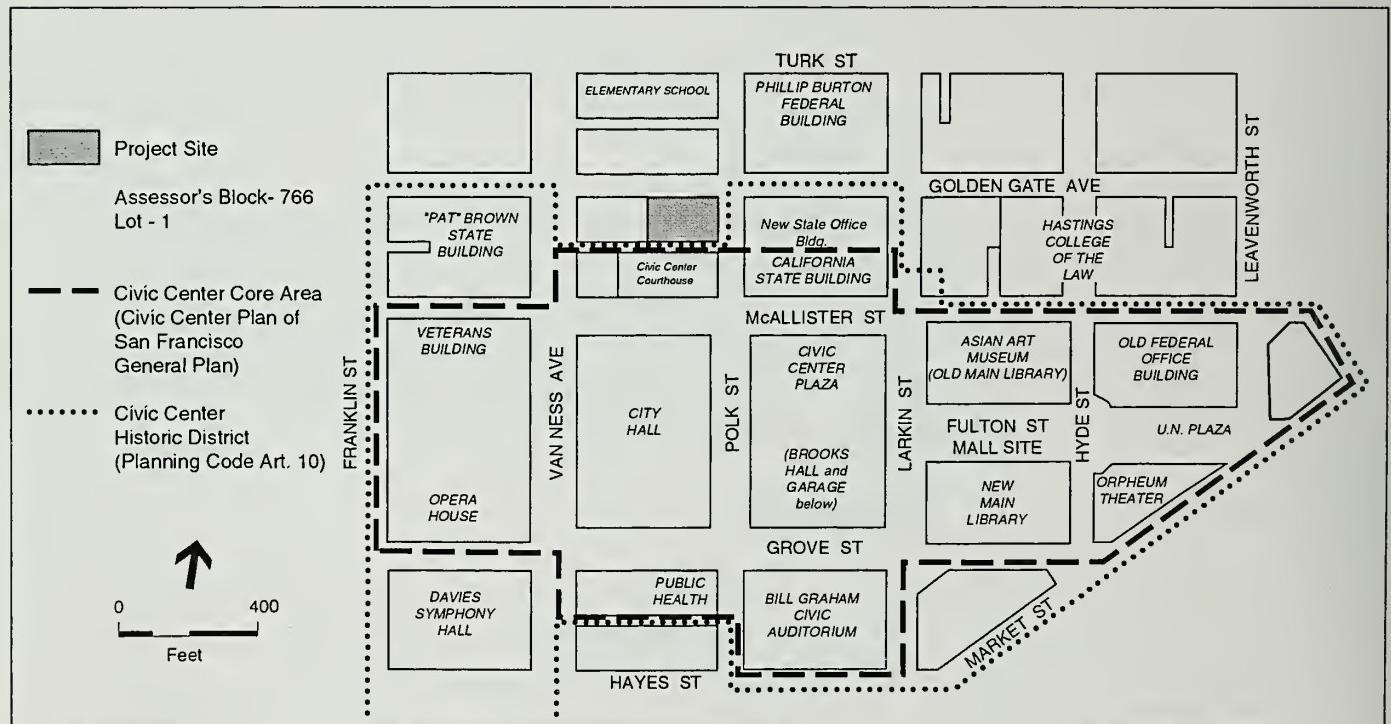
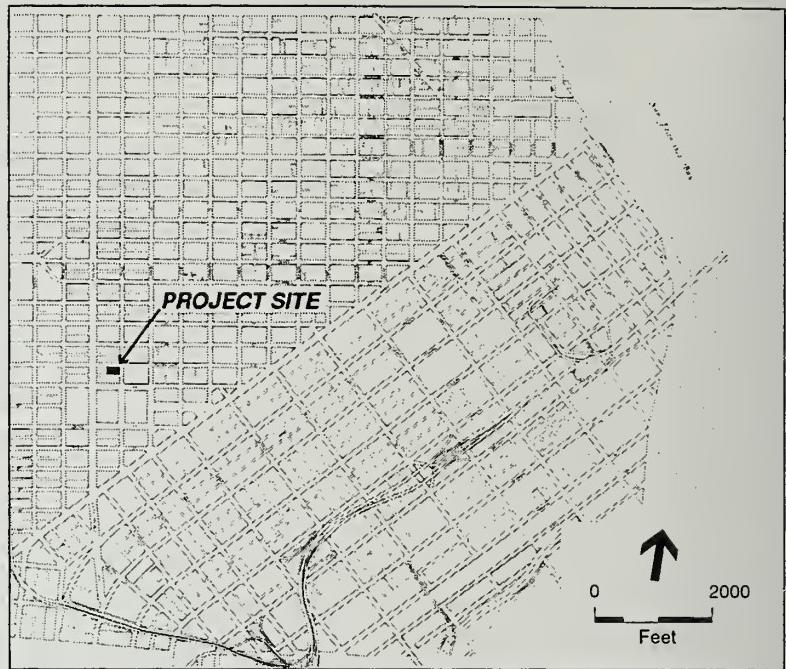
The project site is at the northwestern corner of the San Francisco Civic Center; it is across Polk Street from the new State of California office building, is diagonally across the Polk/Golden Gate intersection from the Philip Burton Federal Building, and is north across Redwood Street from the San Francisco Civic Center Courthouse. City Hall and Civic Center Plaza are further south and southeast, respectively, across McAllister Street. Two low-rise retail buildings are adjacent to the site on the west, and other development to the north and west is also largely commercial.

### **B. PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS**

The project would involve demolition of the existing vacant office building on the site, and construction of a new building for City offices. Two options are under consideration for the new City Administrative Building. Option A would entail construction of a 14-story, 181-foot-tall building containing about 255,500 square feet of office space, while Option B would consist of a 12-story, 156-foot-tall building

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<sup>1</sup> State of California, Department of General Services, *San Francisco/Oakland State Facilities Plan*, May 1992, p. A.14.



SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates

1997.428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■

**Figure 1**  
Project Location

with about 215,000 square feet of office space. The two options analyzed herein are essentially the same in design, with Option A having two additional stories in the shaft, or middle portion, of the building.

Both options are anticipated to include two basement parking levels, accessible from Redwood Street. Each option would include a ground-floor lobby with a loading dock on Redwood Street (about 4,000 sq. ft. total), a partial uppermost mechanical floor containing about 7,500 sq. ft., and about 43,500 sq. ft. devoted to parking and vehicular circulation on the two basement floors. Approximately 100 independently accessible parking spaces would be provided. Option A would total about 303,000 sq. ft., exclusive of the mechanical penthouse, including about 255,500 sq. ft. of office space on 13 stories and the two basement parking levels. Option B would provide approximately 262,500 square feet of floor area, exclusive of the mechanical penthouse, including about 215,000 sq. ft. of office space on 11 stories, plus the basement parking. Table 1 summarizes the project characteristics.

The building would support approximately 800 to 950 City employees, depending on the option approved. Most of these employees are expected to be relocated from existing leased office space elsewhere in the greater Civic Center.

The project would include a height reclassification (amendment of the height and bulk designations in the Planning Code zoning maps and the General Plan Urban Design Element maps) of the site from 130-E (130-foot height limit, bulk limits above 65 feet) to either 200-L or 160-L (200-foot or 160-foot height limit, above 80 feet, maximum length of 250 feet and maximum diagonal dimension of 300 feet) to accommodate the proposed building (depending on the option approved). As noted, approximately 100 parking spaces would be provided (about 140 spaces with valet operations) instead of the 430 to 511 parking spaces required, and the project will seek a variance from the Planning Code requirement for on-site parking (Planning Code Sec. 151). The project would include one loading space to accommodate vans and small trucks at a loading dock on Redwood Street instead of the two loading spaces required; a variance will be sought from the Planning Code requirement for a second loading space (Sec. 152). In compliance with Planning Code Section 155.1, Option A would include at least 37 bicycle parking spaces (24 long-term spaces for employees, plus eight short-term spaces for visitors), while Option B would include 32 bicycle spaces (24 long-term and 8 short-term). The project would also include at least four showers and eight clothes lockers in accordance with Section 155.3.

With the exception of the off-street parking and loading areas, lobby, and mechanical space, the entire proposed building would be used for City employee office space, most likely accommodating departments currently located in leased space elsewhere in the greater Civic Center area.

The proposed City Administrative Building is anticipated to be constructed pursuant to a pilot program for the design and construction of new Resource-Efficient City Buildings (the "Green Building" ordinance) approved by the Board of Supervisors in May 1999 and by the Mayor in June 1999. The pilot program calls for the creation of a multi-departmental task force that, along with the Bureau of Architecture within the Department of Public Works, will identify several Pilot Projects from among

**TABLE 1**  
**PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS**

Characteristic	Option A	Option B
Height (stories)	14	12
Height (feet)	181	156
Office Space (sq. ft.)	255,500	215,000
Lobby and Loading Dock	4,000	4,000
Parking Spaces	100	100
Parking (sq. ft.)	43,500	43,500
Mechanical Space (sq. ft.)	7,500	7,500
Total Floor Area	310,500	270,000
Employees	950	800

Source: San Francisco Bureau of Architecture

construction projects proposed by several City departments. The Pilot Projects will be selected to demonstrate innovative construction techniques, building materials, landscaping techniques, and/or other building systems addressing 11 separate goals: A) improved energy efficiency; B) consideration of energy generation by passive solar or other renewable source; C) improved water conservation; D) healthy indoor air quality; E) adequate storage and collection of recyclables; F) environmentally sensitive landscaping, including planting of drought-resistant native plants and design for landscape maintenance using integrated pest management; G) procurement of building materials with minimal impact on indoor air quality, maximized recycled product content, and future recycling potential; H) building design features that discourage pest infestation, such as sloping ledges to discourage the roosting of pigeons and easy-to-clean floor surfaces to discourage dust mites and other insects; I) stormwater management; J) water pollution prevention; and K) wastewater recycling. The Bureau of Architecture is to report to the Supervisors by 2002 on the environmental, health, and/or economic benefits of the Pilot Projects; standards for and methodology for evaluating the resource efficiency of future projects, and the success of the pilot program.

The proposed City Administrative Building would be a steel-frame structure clad in panels of masonry and/or stone and glass and intended to be compatible with other public buildings in the Civic Center. Based on preliminary design work, the new building is anticipated to be constructed in a generally rectangular shape at levels one through 12 (for Option A) (or levels one through 10 for Option B), to a height of 155 feet (130 feet for Option B) above Golden Gate Avenue. The 13th story (11th story for Option B) would be set back from Golden Gate Avenue to limit new shadow on the Tenderloin Community School one block to the north, and would reach 168 feet (143 feet for Option B) in height. The partial mechanical story (14th for Option A, 12th for Option B) would be set back on three sides –

from Polk Street, Golden Gate Avenue, and the western property line – and would rise to 181 feet (156 feet). A 10-foot tall elevator penthouse would be situated near the southern edge of the roof.<sup>2</sup> The preliminary design also indicates a slightly curved facade in the center portion of levels three through 12 (for Option A) (levels three through 10 for Option B) that would echo the curved facade of the new State Office Building across Polk Street. Figures 2 and 3, pp. 20 and 21, depict axonometric drawings of the proposed building massing for Option A and Option B, respectively. This massing model was used for wind and shadow studies. The treatment of the building facades, their shape, and treatment of materials has not been formally determined, but is expected to represent refinements of this model. This scheme thus illustrates one potential design approach.

The main pedestrian entrance to the proposed building would be on Golden Gate Avenue, near the corner of Polk Street. The main lobby inside this entrance would lead to elevators approximately in the center of the building that would serve all upper floors. A secondary pedestrian entrance would be on Polk Street. As noted above, the building would have a parking entrance and freight loading dock on Redwood Street, along the southern facade. Trash and recycling receptacles would also be located in this area.

The project would include demolition of the existing 525 Golden Gate building, which sustained damage to its facade and interior in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Prior to demolition, the City would undertake remediation of asbestos and other potentially hazardous materials in accordance with local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

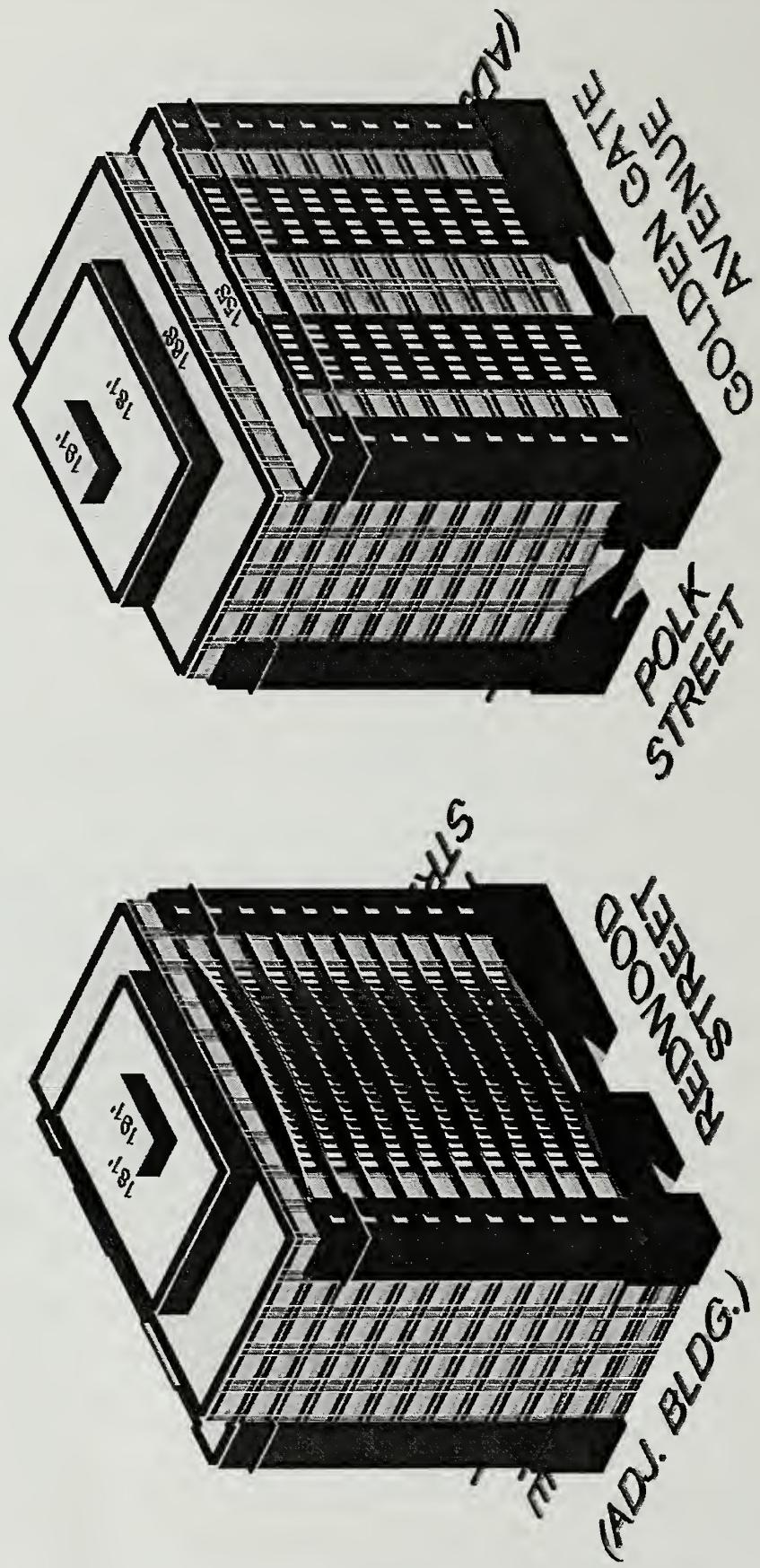
The existing 525 Golden Gate building was constructed in 1959 and is not rated in any known architectural surveys; as noted above, the site is adjacent to nationally and locally designated historic districts. There is no parking in the existing building, which contains one off-street loading space. There are vacant planter boxes at street level on the front facade of the existing building, but no vegetation on the site. Existing street trees on the Golden Gate Avenue and Polk Street sidewalks in front of the project site would be replaced.

Excavation would be required to a depth of approximately 30 feet below the grade level on Golden Gate Avenue. The existing building basement, including the existing loading dock on Redwood Street, would be demolished. The project may include pile driving as part of its foundation system. A geotechnical report would be prepared for the project sponsor and its recommendations reviewed and accepted by the Department of Building Inspection prior to the start of excavation or construction.

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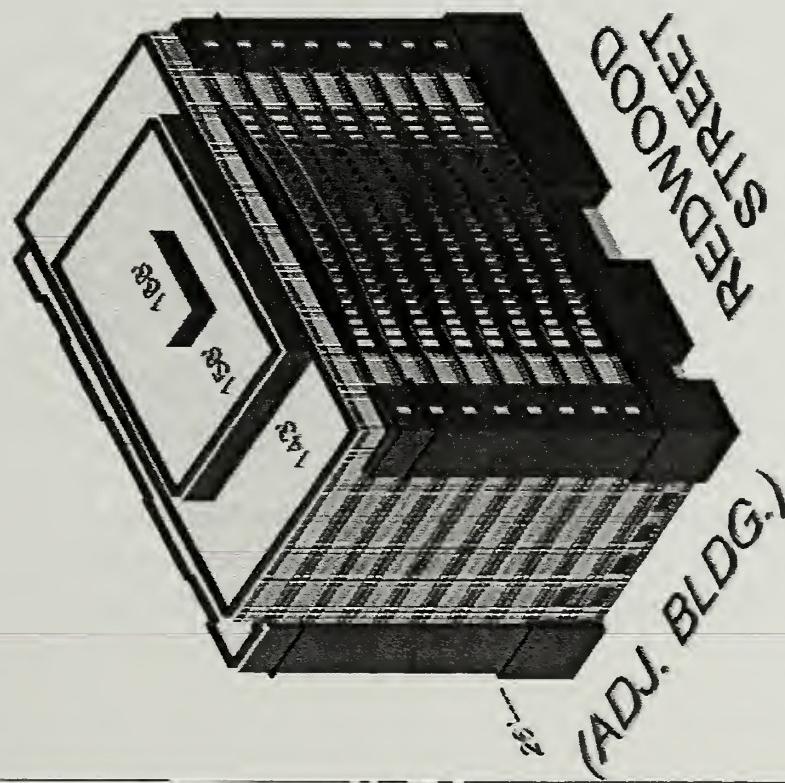
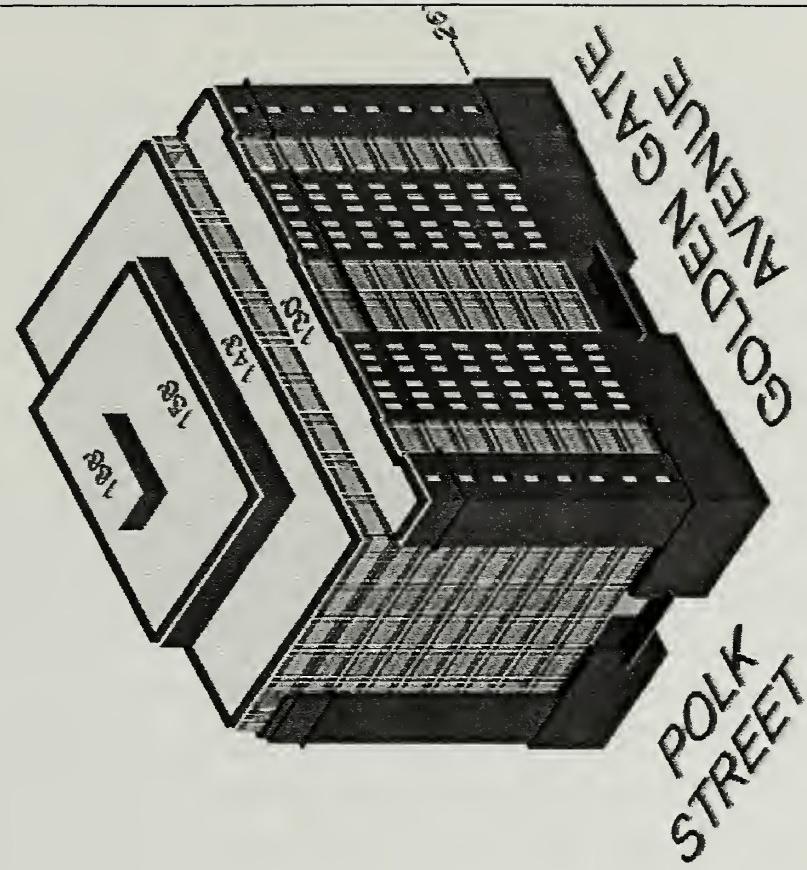
<sup>2</sup> The elevator penthouse would not be counted towards the building height (Planning Code Sec. 260(b)(1)(B)).

1997.428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■  
**Figure 2**  
Axonometric Views of Project Massing  
Option A



SOURCE: San Francisco Department of Public Works, Bureau of Architecture

1997.428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■  
Figure 3  
Axonometric View of Project Massing  
Option B



SOURCE: San Francisco Department of Public Works, Bureau of Architecture

Demolition of the existing building is anticipated to last approximately four months, beginning in early 2001. Construction of the new office building would take approximately 26 months. Occupancy is anticipated by mid-2004. The project is anticipated to be executed through a design-build process, meaning that the City would select a single team to complete the final design and construct the building. Therefore, the final design is subject to change, particularly as concerns architectural details. The design-build process is subject to final approval by the Board of Supervisors and the mayor.

## C. PROJECT SPONSOR'S OBJECTIVES

The project sponsor is the City and County of San Francisco (City). The City desires to consolidate many of its administrative functions in the immediate vicinity of City Hall, allowing for better interaction between those offices, City Hall and the public, consistent with the direction in the Civic Center Plan, an area plan within the San Francisco General Plan, to encourage governmental activities and functions to locate "within a 'sphere of influence' within the Civic Center to avoid inefficient dispersal of these activities throughout the area [and] in new consolidated facilities rather than being dispersed throughout the adjacent area in leased or rented quarters" (Objective 2, Policies 3 and 4).

Construction of a new City office building would achieve a long-term cost savings to the City by accommodating portions of City departments that currently occupy leased space. The City currently leases approximately 1,000,000 square feet of office space in the Civic Center area.<sup>3</sup>

Placing several City offices at the project site, in close proximity to City Hall, would allow for easier interaction between employees of various departments and would benefit members of the public who must visit various offices. It would provide good transit access via MUNI surface lines, Golden Gate Transit, and SamTrans (all within a block of the project site), as well as MUNI Metro and BART (five blocks away).

By removing a vacant, earthquake-damaged building and constructing a new structure, the proposed project would also assist in the overall revitalization of the Civic Center Area that includes the construction of the new Courthouse, the New Main Library, the new and renovated State Office Building complex, and the new Tenderloin Community (elementary) School at Elm Street and Van Ness Avenue; the recently completed renovations of City Hall, the Opera House, and the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium; conversion of the Old Main Library to the Asian Art Museum (in progress); and the planned renovation of Civic Center Plaza.

## D. PROJECT APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

This EIR will undergo a public comment period as noted on the cover, including a public hearing before the Planning Commission on the Draft EIR. Following the public comment period, responses to written

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<sup>3</sup> Figure as of August 1, 2000; provided by Steve Legnitto, San Francisco Department of Real Estate, August 6, 2000.

and oral comments will be prepared and published in a Draft Summary of Comments and Responses document. The Draft EIR will be revised as appropriate and, with the Draft Summary of Comments and Responses, presented to the Planning Commission for certification as to accuracy, objectivity, and completeness. No approvals or permits may be issued before the Final EIR is certified.

Following certification of the EIR, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission would be asked to approve rezoning of the site to change the Height and Bulk District of the entire site from 130-E to 200-L or 16-L and to similarly change the Height and Bulk Maps in the General Plan Urban Design Element in order to allow for construction of the proposed project.

The Planning Commission would also be asked to consider a General Plan referral determining conformity with the General Plan for demolition of existing building and construction of the new City Administrative Building. The Planning Department and the Department of Building Inspection would be asked to approve demolition and construction permits. No building permit applications have been filed to date.

Because the project would be a public building constructed on City-owned land, the Planning Commission would review and the Art Commission would be asked to approve the building design.

The Zoning Administrator would be asked to approve a variance for less than the Planning Code-required amount of off-street parking and loading spaces.

On November 4, 1986, the voters of San Francisco passed Proposition M, the Accountable Planning Initiative, which established eight Priority Policies under Planning Code Section 101.1. These policies are: preservation and enhancement of neighborhood-serving retail uses; protection of neighborhood character; preservation and enhancement of affordable housing; discouragement of commuter automobiles; protection of industrial and service land uses from commercial office development and enhancement of resident employment and business ownership; earthquake preparedness; landmark and historic building preservation; and protection of open space. Prior to issuing a permit for any project which requires an Initial Study under the *California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA), or adopting any zoning ordinance or development agreement, the City is required to find that the proposed project or legislation is consistent with the Priority Policies. The motion by the Planning Commission approving or disapproving the project will contain the analysis determining whether the project is in conformance with the Priority Policies.

As a City office building, the project is not subject to approval under Planning Code Section 321 and 322, the Office Development Annual Limit, nor would the project office space be counted against the annual limit of office square footage that may be developed in San Francisco.

# **CHAPTER III**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING AND IMPACTS**

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### **A. LAND USE AND GENERAL PLAN CONFORMITY**

#### **LAND USE**

The Initial Study concluded that the project would not have adverse land use impacts. Land use setting information is included in the EIR for informational purposes, to orient the reader.

The Civic Center is identified and functions as a central area for governmental and cultural activity. Governmental activities and offices, private offices, retail, restaurant, and residential uses, and historic landmarks surround Civic Center Plaza. Many residential and (primarily non-government) office structures have ground-floor retail, including restaurant and personal service, uses.

The project site was occupied by government offices until shortly after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Land uses south and east of the project site are primarily offices of city, state, and federal agencies, including a series of public buildings that frame Civic Center Plaza. The new San Francisco Civic Center Courthouse is immediately south, across Redwood Street, and City Hall and the Department of Public Health are further south; these buildings are to the west of the Plaza. The State of California Civic Center Complex, including a new office building on Golden Gate Avenue and the historic California State Building on McAllister Street, is to the east of the project site, across Polk Street, and borders Civic Center Plaza on the north. To the east of Civic Center Plaza are the Old Main Library building (under renovation as the future home of the Asian Art Museum), New Main Library, and to the south, Bill Graham Civic Auditorium. The Civic Center Garage and Brooks Hall are beneath Civic Center Plaza.

Northeast of the project site, across the intersection of Polk and Golden Gate, is the Phillip Burton Federal Building. This structure is part of a second ring of civic buildings around Civic Center Plaza that also includes the Old Federal Building on U.N. Plaza; the new Tenderloin Community (elementary) school on Turk Street between Polk Street and Van Ness Avenue; and, on Van Ness Avenue, the Edmund G. "Pat" Brown State Office Building at McAllister Street, the War Memorial Opera House and Veterans Building between McAllister and Grove Streets, the Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall at Grove Street, and the former headquarters of the San Francisco Unified School District (now planned as the High School of the Arts campus) at Hayes Street; the school district headquarters is currently located at 555 Franklin Street at McAllister Street. There are also private office uses to the north of the project site and commercial uses to the west, including two restaurants on the project block of Golden Gate Avenue.

The nearest residences are condominiums at Opera Plaza, at Van Ness Avenue and Golden Gate, one block west, and apartments at Larkin and Golden Gate, Van Ness and McAllister, and Polk and Turk, all about one block from the site. A senior housing project has been approved at the northeast corner of Golden Gate and Van Ness Avenues, but construction has not begun.

The City has been planning for additional office space in the Civic Center for more than 10 years. In 1987, when the City was leasing nearly 200,000 square feet of office space in the Civic Center area, a Planning Department report identified possible development opportunities for City office space at Polk and McAllister Streets – where the new Courthouse has since been completed – and at Van Ness Avenue and Grove Street. Following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the State of California decided not to repair the existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building, and the Planning Department, in its 1994 Draft Civic Center Study, identified the half block north of Redwood Street, between Polk Street and Van Ness Avenue – including the proposed project site – as a suitable location for a new City office building.

The proposed project, a new building containing approximately 215,000 to 255,500 square feet of City offices and about 50,000 square feet of parking, would result in an increase in intensity of land uses on the project site and in the vicinity, given that the existing building is vacant. However, the project would not alter the general land use pattern of the immediate area, which includes numerous government office buildings noted above. The existing building on the project site is about 184,000 gross square feet. Thus, the proposed project would result in a net addition of between about 31,000 and 71,500 square feet.<sup>4</sup> As a reintroduction of government office use on the site, the project would be compatible with existing nearby uses, notably the Civic Center location of government offices and related government functions. The project also would not disrupt or divide the neighborhood, since it would be developed within the existing block configuration. Therefore, effects related to land use would not be significant.

## GENERAL PLAN

The San Francisco General Plan, which provides general policies and objectives to guide land use decisions, contains some policies that relate to physical environmental issues. Some key objectives and policies are noted below. No substantial or obvious conflicts with the General Plan have been identified, although the project would require amendment of the Height and Bulk Maps in the General Plan Urban Design Element to accommodate the proposed building. The Planning Commission would consider the question of General Plan conformity further. Any conflicts not identified herein would not change the physical environmental effects of the proposed project. Relevant General Plan policies are listed below.

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<sup>4</sup> The increase in occupied floor area would be greater, as the existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building has a relatively inefficient floor plan, with only about two-thirds of the gross floor area considered "usable," according to the *San Francisco/Oakland State Facilities Plan* (see Note 1, p. 15).

### ***THE COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT***

- Objective 9, "Assure that institutional uses are located in a manner that will enhance their efficient and effective use;" and Policy 1, "Locate institutional uses according to the Institutional Facilities Plan."

### ***THE RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT***

- Objective 2, "Develop and maintain a diversified and balanced city-wide system of high quality public open space;" and Policy 3, "Preserve sunlight in public open spaces."

### ***THE TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT***

- Objective 1, Policy 1.3, "Give priority to public transit and other alternatives to the private automobile as the means of meeting San Francisco's transportation needs, particularly those of commuters."
- Objective 17, Policy 17.1, "Discourage the provision of new long-term parking downtown and near major employment centers."
- Objective 24 Policy 24.2, "Maintain and expand the planting of street trees."
- Objective 26, Policy 26.1, "Retain streets and alleys not required for traffic , or portions thereof, for through pedestrian circulation and open space," and Policy 26.3, "Encourage pedestrian serving uses on the sidewalk."
- Objective 27, "Ensure that bicycles can be used safely and conveniently as a primary means of transportation, as well as for recreational purposes."
- Objective 28, "Provide secure and convenient parking facilities for bicycles;" Policy 28.1, "Provide secure bicycle parking in new governmental, commercial and residential developments;" and Policy 28.33, "Provide parking facilities which are safe, secure, and convenient."
- Objective 29, "City government should play a leadership role in increasing bicycle use;" and Policy 29.1, "Consider the needs of bicycling and the improvement of bicycle accommodation in all city decisions and improve accommodation as much as possible."

### ***THE URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT***

- Objective 1, "Emphasis of the characteristic pattern which gives to the city and its neighborhoods an image, a sense of purpose, and a means of orientation;" Policy 3, "Recognize that buildings, when seen together, produce a total effect that characterizes the city and its districts;" Policy 4, "Protect and promote large-scale landscaping and open space that define districts and topography;" Policy 6, "Make centers of activity more prominent through design of street features and by other means;" and Policy 7, "Recognize the natural boundaries of districts, and promote connections between districts."

- Objective 2, “Conservation of resources which provide a sense of nature, continuity with the past, and freedom from overcrowding;” Policy 6, “Respect the character of older development nearby in the design of new buildings;” and Policy 7, “Recognize and protect outstanding and unique areas that contribute in an extraordinary degree to San Francisco’s visual form and character.”
- Objective 3, “Moderation of major new development to complement the city pattern, the resources to be conserved and the neighborhood environment;” Policy 1, “Promote harmony in the visual relationships and transitions between new and older buildings;” Policy 2, “Avoid extreme contrasts in color, shape and other characteristics which will cause new buildings to stand out in excess of their public importance;” Policy 3, “Promote efforts to achieve high quality of design for buildings to be constructed at prominent locations;” and Policy 4, “Promote building forms that will respect and improve the integrity of open spaces and other public areas;” and Policy 5, “Relate the height of buildings to important attributes of the city pattern and to the height and character of existing development.”

## **THE CIVIC CENTER AREA PLAN**

The project site is outside of, but immediately adjacent to the “core area” of the Civic Center Area Plan, which abuts the southern boundary of the site on Redwood Street. The Area Plan designates the project site for administrative use.

- Objective 1, “Maintain and reinforce the Civic Center as the symbolic and ceremonial focus of community government and culture;” Policy 1, “Emphasize key public buildings, particularly City Hall, through visually prominent siting;” Policy 2, “Maintain the formal architectural character of the Civic Center;” Policy 3, “Design Civic Center buildings and open spaces to serve as public gathering places for ceremonial, cultural, recreational, and other community activities;” Policy 4, “Provide a sense of identity and cohesiveness through unifying street and Plaza design treatments;” and Policy 5, “Maintain existing streets as vehicular, pedestrian or open space corridors.”
- Objective 2, “Develop the Civic Center as a cohesive area for the administrative functions of city, state, and federal government, and as a focal point for cultural, ceremonial, and community activities;” Policy 1, “Design the Civic Center to promote efficiency and convenience within and between the governmental entities represented, and provide for their orderly expansion;” Policy 3, “Encourage governmental activities of each level of government to locate within a ‘sphere of influence’ within the Civic Center to avoid inefficient dispersal of these activities throughout the area;” and Policy 4, “Encourage administrative-oriented governmental functions (executive, legislative, and judicial) to locate in new consolidated facilities rather than being dispersed throughout the adjacent area in leased or rented quarters.”
- Objective 3, “Provide convenient access to and circulation within the Civic Center, and support facilities and services;” Policy 1, “Locate buildings employing large number of employees and/or attracting large numbers of visitors in convenient pedestrian proximity to public transit and off-street parking facilities;” and Policy 3, “Provide and price parking for short-term visitor use, and discourage long-term parking. Encourage transit use as the primary means of access to the Civic Center.”

## **THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ELEMENT**

- Objective 1, Policy 4, "Assure that all new development meets strict environmental quality standards and recognizes human needs."
- Objective 4, Policy 1, "Support and comply with objectives, policies, and air quality standards of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District."
- Objective 11, "Promote land uses that are compatible with various transportation noise levels."
- Objective 12, "Establish the City and County of San Francisco as a model for energy management."
- Objective 15, "Increase the energy efficiency of transportation and encourage land use patterns and methods of transportation which use less energy;" and Policy 3, "Encourage an urban design pattern that will minimize travel requirements among working, shopping, recreation, school and childcare areas."

## **THE COMMUNITY SAFETY ELEMENT**

- Objective 2, Policy 2.1, "Assure that new construction meets current structural and life safety standards;" Policy 2.7, "Abate structural and non-structural hazards in City-owned structures;" and Policy 2.9, "Consider information about geologic hazards whenever City decisions that will influence land use, building density, building configurations or infrastructure are made."

## **DRAFT CIVIC CENTER PLAN**

In addition to the above adopted General Plan policies, the Planning Department in October 1994 published a draft Civic Center Study, including proposed revisions to the Civic Center Area Plan. Although not adopted, the following information on the draft plan is provided for the reader's information.

The draft Civic Center plan calls for locating governmental legislative, administrative and permit functions in City-owned buildings near City Hall to promote the efficiency and convenience of governmental agencies and reduce long-term lease costs (Objective 1, Policies 1 and 2). The draft plan also promotes both daytime and nighttime uses to ensure the vitality of Civic Center (Objective 1, Policy 3) and calls for Civic Center buildings and open spaces to serve as public gathering places (Objective 1, Policy 4). The draft plan recommends preserving and strengthening the urban form of Civic Center (Objective 2), protecting view corridors (Objective 2, Policy 1), and promoting harmony in building heights while maintaining the prominence of City Hall (Objective 2, Policy 2). Objective 3, Policy 1 calls for maintenance of the formal architectural character of Civic Center with City Hall as the centerpiece, while Policy 3 states that new buildings should be compatible with the architectural character of Civic Center and incorporate major common design elements. The project site is within the Secondary Facades portion of the core area under the draft Civic Center plan, which includes proposed design guidelines for secondary facades recommending that eye-catching features that could compete

with City Hall should be avoided, and that the mass of buildings should not overpower existing historic buildings.

## B. VISUAL QUALITY

### SETTING

The existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building is about 100 feet tall and has glass curtain walls on three sides. The western wall has no windows and is finished in rose-colored concrete. The building entrance is at the westernmost portion of the principal Golden Gate Avenue facade. Above the entrance, the building is clad in white marble, and the same cladding is used on the eastern portion of the south (Redwood Street) facade, as well as the northeast and southeast corners of the building. The building's form is that of a rectangular cube, except where the western wall rises approximately 25 feet above the parapet to encompass a mechanical penthouse on the roof.

Dark brown polished granite cladding covers the building base on three sides, including planter boxes on the Golden Gate Avenue facade that are recessed beneath the main, overhanging facade. Above the base, the building's stories are differentiated within the curtain walls by alternating bands of clear glass and polished granite in a grey-pink color. Typical of the International Style in which the building was designed, 525 Golden Gate Avenue has little facade detail save the vertical aluminum window mullions and a simple canopy over the main pedestrian entrance. There is no cornice or other molding atop the facades.

The building occupies its entire site. Freight loading is via a loading dock at the rear, on Redwood Street. There is no parking within the existing building.

The existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building is substantially taller than other buildings on its block. Immediately west of the project site is a single-story retail building, occupied by a restaurant, and a two-story office-over-retail structure. At the corner of Van Ness and Golden Gate Avenues is a recently remodeled and enlarged building, now three stories tall, that also contains a ground-floor restaurant. Buildings across Golden Gate Avenue from the project site are also of small to moderate scale; the tallest is about 55 feet in height.

Across Polk Street from the 525 Golden Gate Avenue building is the newly completed 14-story State of California office building (approximately 185 feet tall at the street wall parapet and 205 feet tall at the mechanical penthouse), and northeast across the intersection of Polk and Golden Gate is the Phillip Burton Federal Building, which is nearly 300 feet tall and is the most massive structure in the project area.

Because of the openness of Civic Center Plaza, the existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building is readily visible from most of the plaza, behind the new Civic Center Courthouse. The existing building is not readily visible in mid-range and long-range views because of surrounding development. Although the

existing structure it the tallest on its block, in views from more than one block away, it is largely obscured by other buildings, including the federal and state office buildings to the east, Opera Plaza to the northwest, and the Pat Brown state office building to the southwest. Figure 4 shows views of the existing building and Figure 5, p. 32, presents a view of the building from Civic Center Plaza, the most public and most important viewpoint from which the project would be judged.

## IMPACTS

### *SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA*

San Francisco has no formally adopted significance criteria regarding visual quality and urban design. For purposes of this EIR, the project would be considered to have a significant effect on the environment if it would:

- substantially degrade or obstruct publicly accessible scenic views;
- substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the area, or result in a substantial, demonstrable negative aesthetic effect; or
- generate obtrusive light or glare that would adversely affect views or substantially affect other properties.

### *IMPACT ANALYSIS*

The new City Administrative Building would be up to about 181 feet tall (for Option A; 156 feet tall for Option B), plus a 10-foot elevator penthouse. A preliminary design prepared by the Bureau of Architecture of the Department of Public Works depicts the new building as generally rectangular in shape. The preliminary design includes a setback from the north (Golden Gate Avenue) façade at the uppermost office story, and a partial top story containing mechanical equipment. The preliminary design also shows the new building with a slightly curved façade on the south (Redwood Street) side, echoing one of the major elements of the new state office building across Polk Street. Because the project would be executed through a design-build process, the design, in particular with regard to architectural detailing, is subject to change once the City selects a development team. However, the massing would be expected to remain largely as portrayed.

The preliminary design emphasizes a classical three-part vertical composition (base, middle, and top): The base would be clad in masonry on all three street facades, linking the building's design with other public structures in the Civic Center.



A - Looking South Along Polk Street

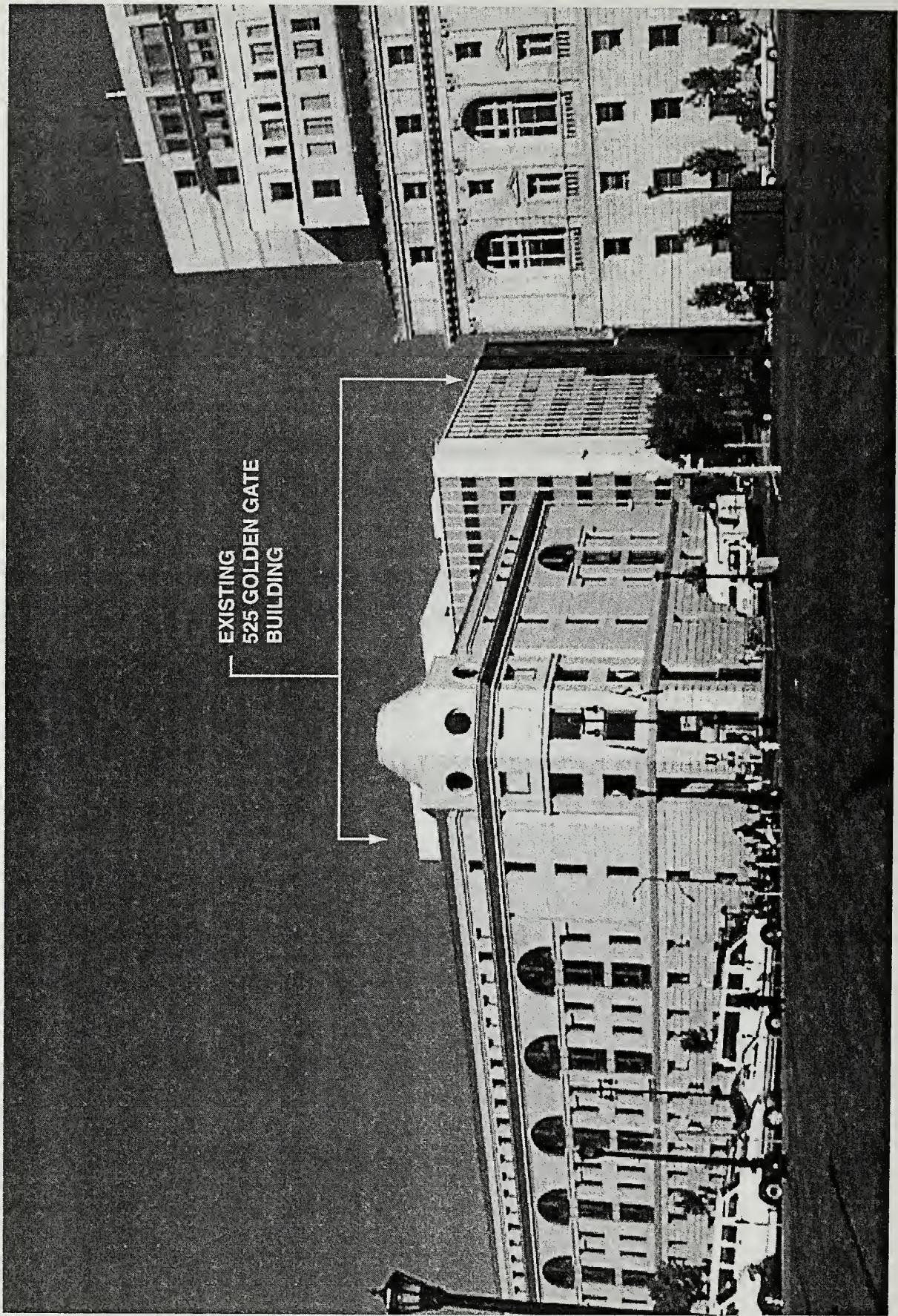


B - Looking West Along Golden Gate Avenue Towards Main Entrance

SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates

97.428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■

**Figure 4**  
Views of Existing Building



SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates

1997.428E: S.F. City Admininistrative Building / ESA 960223 ■

**Figure 5**  
View of Existing Building  
from Civic Center Plaza

The new building would exceed the 130-foot height limit for the site and would therefore require amendment of the zoning maps and General Plan Urban Design Element height and bulk maps. However, under Option B – the shorter of the two proposals – the street wall height along Golden Gate Avenue would be maintained at 130 feet. Under Option A, the Golden Gate Avenue street wall would reach a height of 155 feet. Figure 6, p. 34 shows an existing view of the project site and the existing building from the intersection of Van Ness and Golden Gate Avenues, and Figures 7 and 8, pp. 35 and 36, depict visual simulations of the two options for the proposed project from this vantage point.

The proposed building would appear as a major new visual element in the Civic Center, but would not block public views of the Bay, hills, or other regional landmarks, none of which is currently visible over the top of the existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue Building. Nor would the project obscure important architectural resources in the Civic Center, as the new building would be constructed near the northwestern corner of the Civic Center, a block away from the key buildings that visually frame Civic Center Plaza. In views from the Plaza towards the site and City Hall, City Hall and its 300-foot dome would remain as a major visual landmark. Existing views of City Hall from the north are limited by dense development; however, the top of the City Hall dome is currently visible from the east sidewalk of Polk Street between Turk and Eddy Streets, and the project would block this view.

The proposed project would be constructed on the edge of the Civic Center, just outside of the local historic district that is listed in Article 10 of the Planning Code and also outside of two separate districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. However, the project would not fundamentally alter the relationship of the buildings within these historic districts, which are unified around the theme of maintaining the visual prominence of City Hall. Figure 9, p. 37, shows an existing view of the project site from Civic Center Plaza opposite City Hall, and Figures 10 and 11, pp. 38 and 39, present visual simulations of the two options for the proposed project from this key Civic Center Plaza viewpoint..

For example, the 1974 nomination form for the National Register historic district – the first prepared for the Civic Center – states that the major buildings within the Civic Center should be evaluated based on “the degree to which each enhances the group without distracting from the City Hall. These qualities are achieved through a harmony of color, material, scale, size, texture, rhythm, and style.” Although the proposed City Administrative Building would be outside the National Register district (and, even if within the district would not be a contributory structure because of its new construction), the proposed building would not substantially detract from the relationship of the other major buildings, including the historic California State Building on McAllister Street, to City Hall, because the project would be set back far enough from the core of the district such that it would not significantly distract the focus from City Hall, the key element in the group of Beaux Arts buildings that make up the principal structures in the Civic Center historic districts. Appendix J of Planning Code Article 10 makes the same statement as the National Register nomination form regarding the relationship of other Civic Center buildings to City Hall. The project would not alter this fundamental relationship.



SOURCE: San Francisco Department of Public Works, Bureau of Architecture

1997.428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■

**Figure 6**  
View of Project Site from  
Golden Gate and Van Ness Avenues



SOURCE: San Francisco Department of Public Works, Bureau of Architecture

1997.428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■

Figure 7

Visual Simulation of Proposed Project Viewed from  
Golden Gate and Van Ness Avenues  
Option A

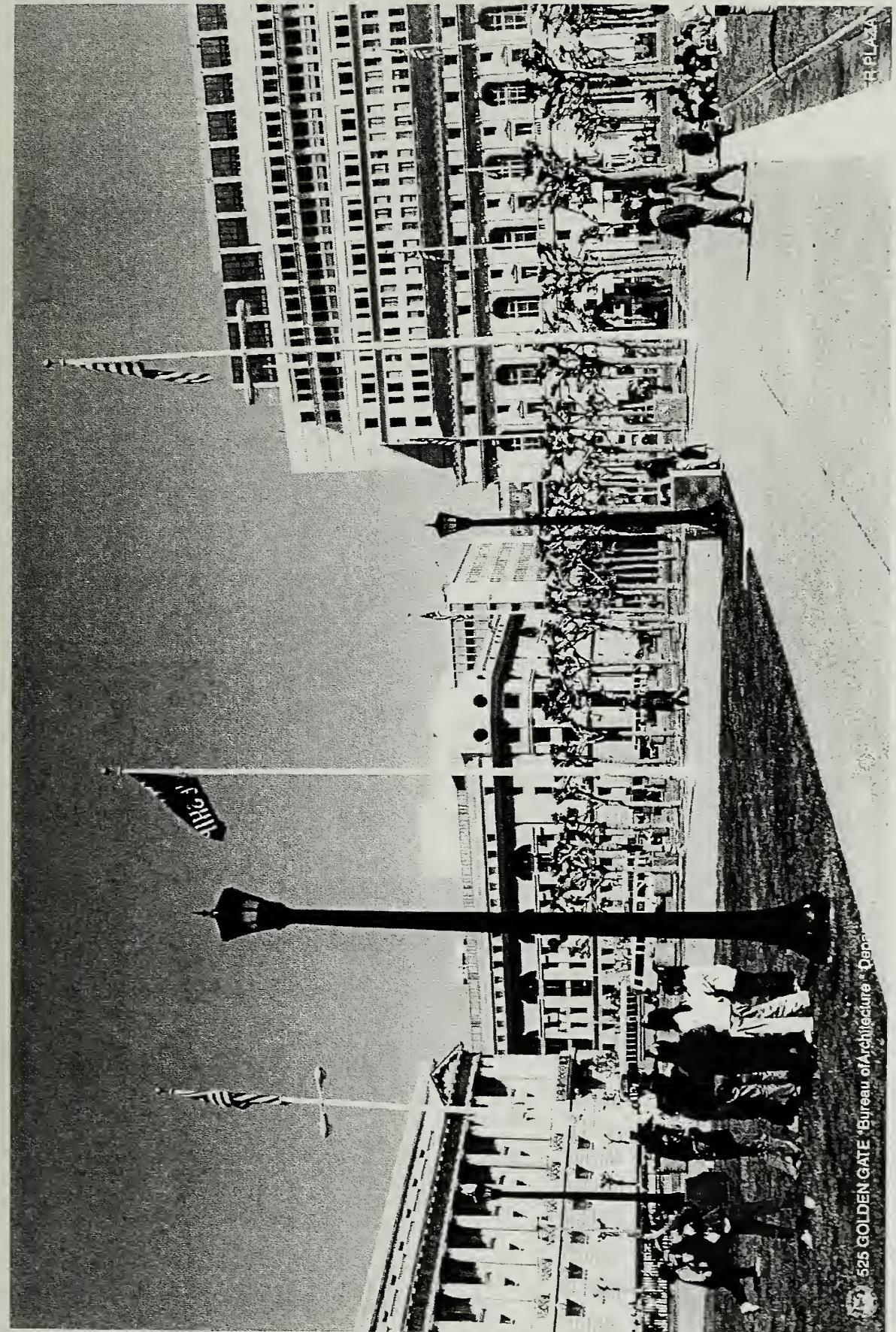


1997.428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■

SOURCE: San Francisco Department of Public Works, Bureau of Architecture

**Figure 8**

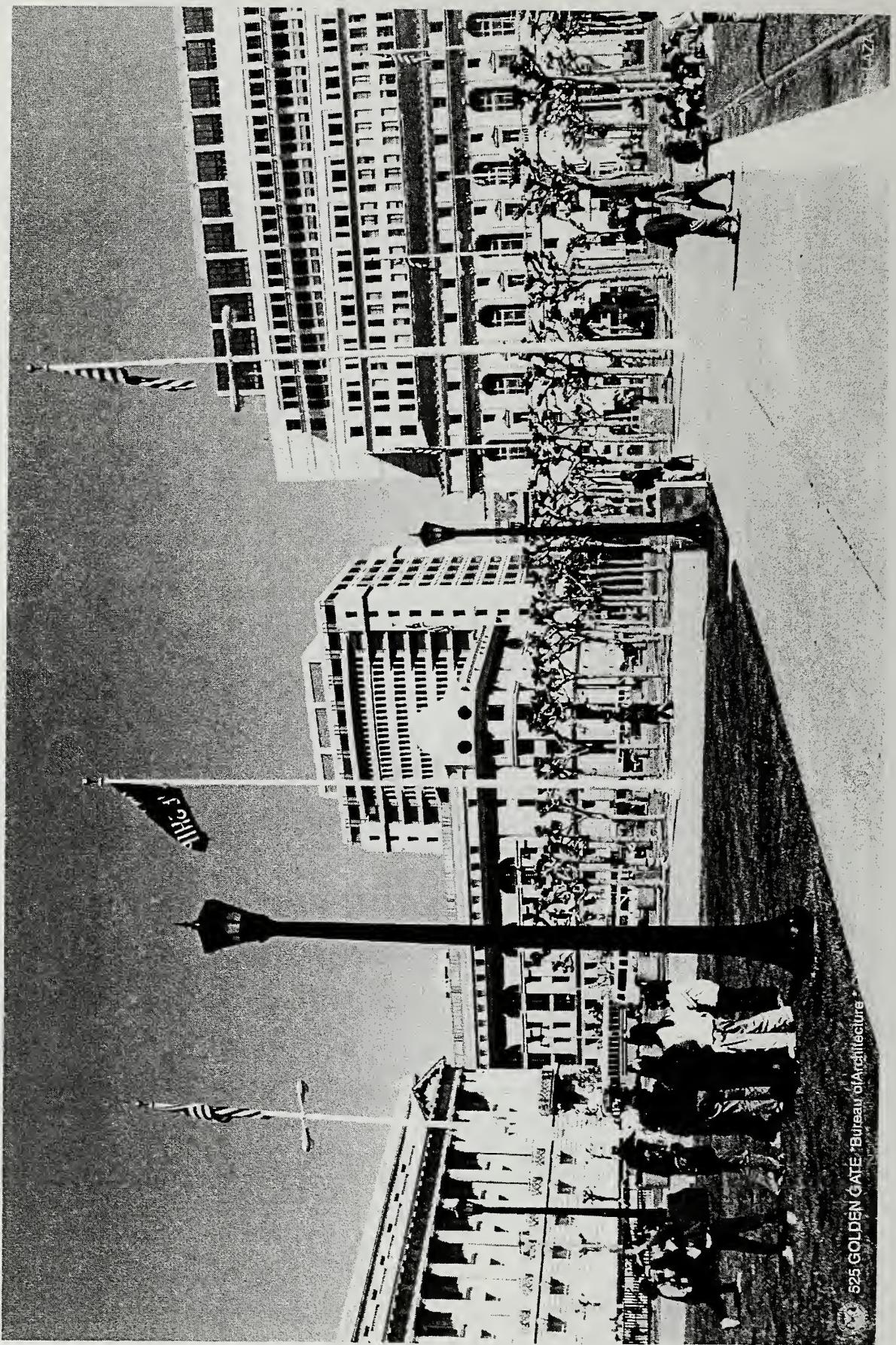
Visual Simulation of Proposed Project Viewed from  
Golden Gate and Van Ness Avenues  
Option B



SOURCE: San Francisco Department of Public Works, Bureau of Architecture

1997.428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■

Figure 9  
View of Project Site from Civic Center Plaza

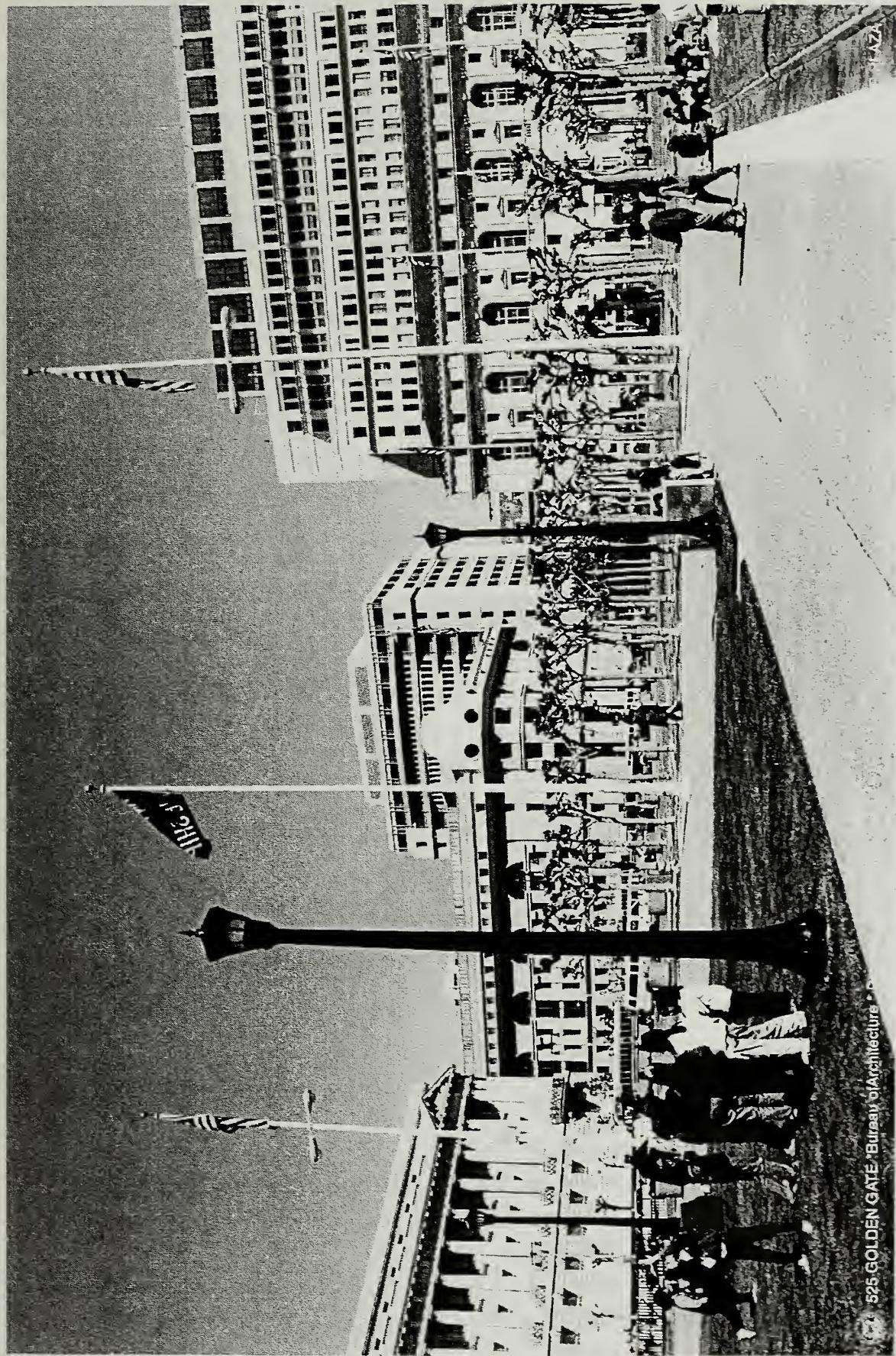


SOURCE: San Francisco Department of Public Works, Bureau of Architecture

1997.428E. S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■

Figure 10  
Visual Simulation of Proposed Project Viewed from Civic Center Plaza

Option A



SOURCE: San Francisco Department of Public Works, Bureau of Architecture

1997-428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■

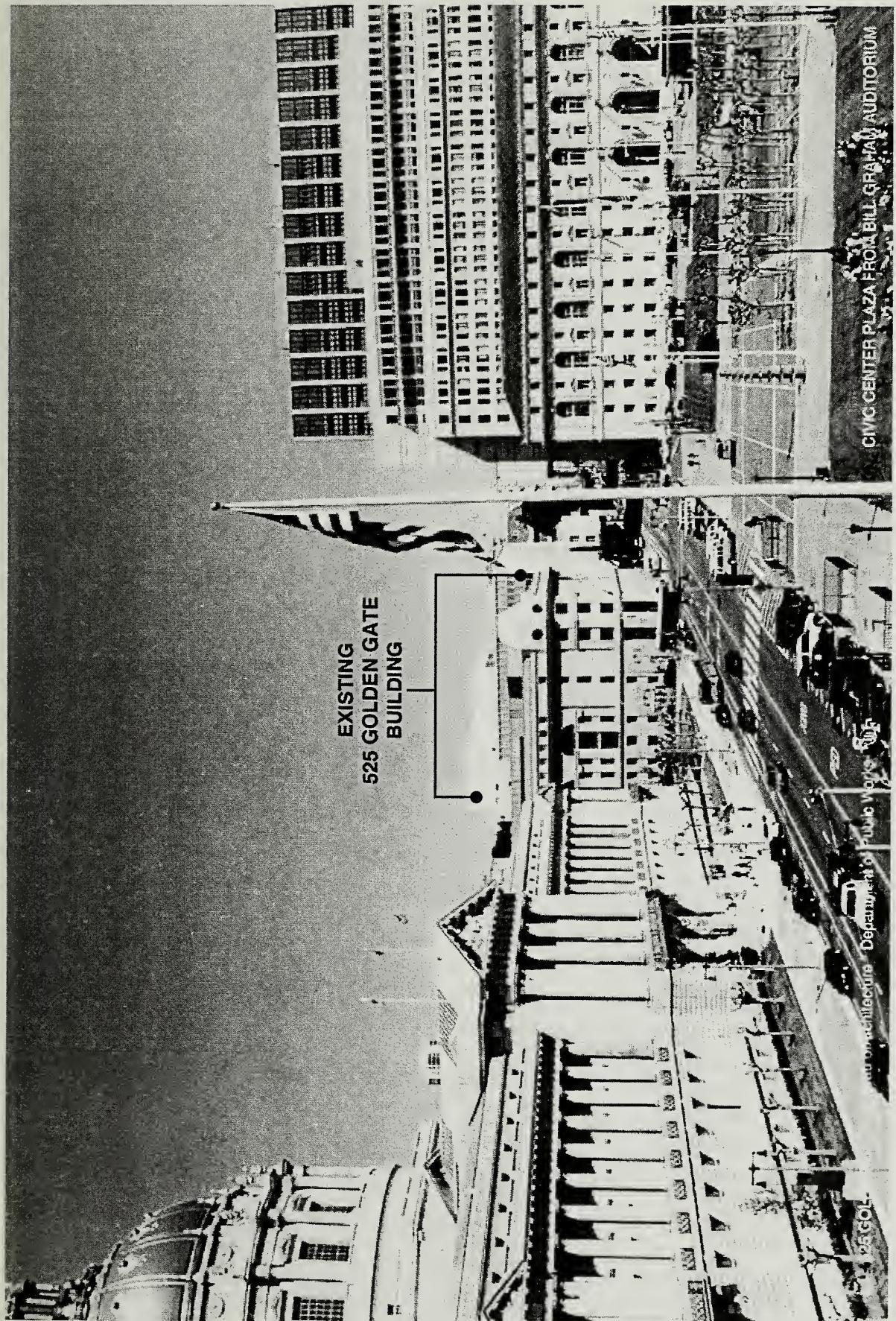
Figure 11  
Visual Simulation of Proposed Project Viewed from Civic Center Plaza  
Option B

Given the project sponsor's intention to use exterior materials that are compatible with other public buildings in the Civic Center, the new building would be compatible at its base with other major government structures, and thus near-range pedestrian views would not be adversely affected to a substantial degree.

Depending on the option approved, the main mass of the City Administrative Building (excluding the upper mechanical floor) would be between about 15 and 40 feet shorter than the new State Office Building across Polk Street (approximately 185 feet tall at the street wall parapet and 205 feet tall at the mechanical penthouse). Option A would be about 110 feet shorter than the Phillip Burton Federal Building on Golden Gate Avenue between Polk and Larkin Streets (295 feet), while Option B would be one-half the height of the Federal Building. In comparison to the newly-constructed San Francisco Civic Center Courthouse across Redwood Street (about 85 feet to the parapet and 100 feet to the dome at the corner of Polk and McAllister Streets), Option A would be nearly twice the height, while Option B would be about two-thirds again as tall as the Courthouse. When viewed from Civic Center Plaza, the height of the new building would be accentuated in comparison to the Courthouse, owing to the increase in elevation northward on Polk Street. The new building would also well shorter than the dome of City Hall one block away (about 260 feet to the top of the dome and 300 feet to the tip of the spire). It would be taller than the base of City Hall, which is approximately 75 feet tall at the corner of Polk and McAllister Streets. Figure 12, p. 41 shows an existing view of the project site and the existing building from the upper level of Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, to allow for a comparison in heights of the proposed project, the State Office Building, and the Federal Building. Figures 13 and 14, pp. 42 and 43, depict visual simulations of the two options for the proposed project from this vantage point.

The new City Administrative Building would be visible from surrounding areas and would add modestly to the overall mass of structures visible in views looking to the northwest from Civic Center Plaza and to the south from the newly remodeled Federal Building plaza and the Tenderloin Community School. Resulting views would be typical of views experienced in urbanized areas, in that structures would continue to be the dominant elements in the visual field. No existing scenic views or vistas would be substantially impaired, as the existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building is tall enough to block long-range views that might otherwise be available from the project vicinity.

The new building's height is a result of program needs, given the size constraints of the site. The height, bulk and form of the proposed project may be considered intrinsically pleasing or not, depending on the aesthetic standards of individual viewers and, to some extent, on the details of the final design; the net result could be attractive to some, but not to others. Nevertheless, because the building would be constructed at the perimeter of the Civic Center, across the street from the two tallest existing buildings in the vicinity and half a block from the towers of Opera Plaza, and because the building would not alter the fundamental relationship between the major Civic Center buildings and City Hall, the project would not be out of scale with surrounding development, nor would it adversely affect the adjacent historic districts. In view of the above, the project would not result in a substantial, demonstrable negative

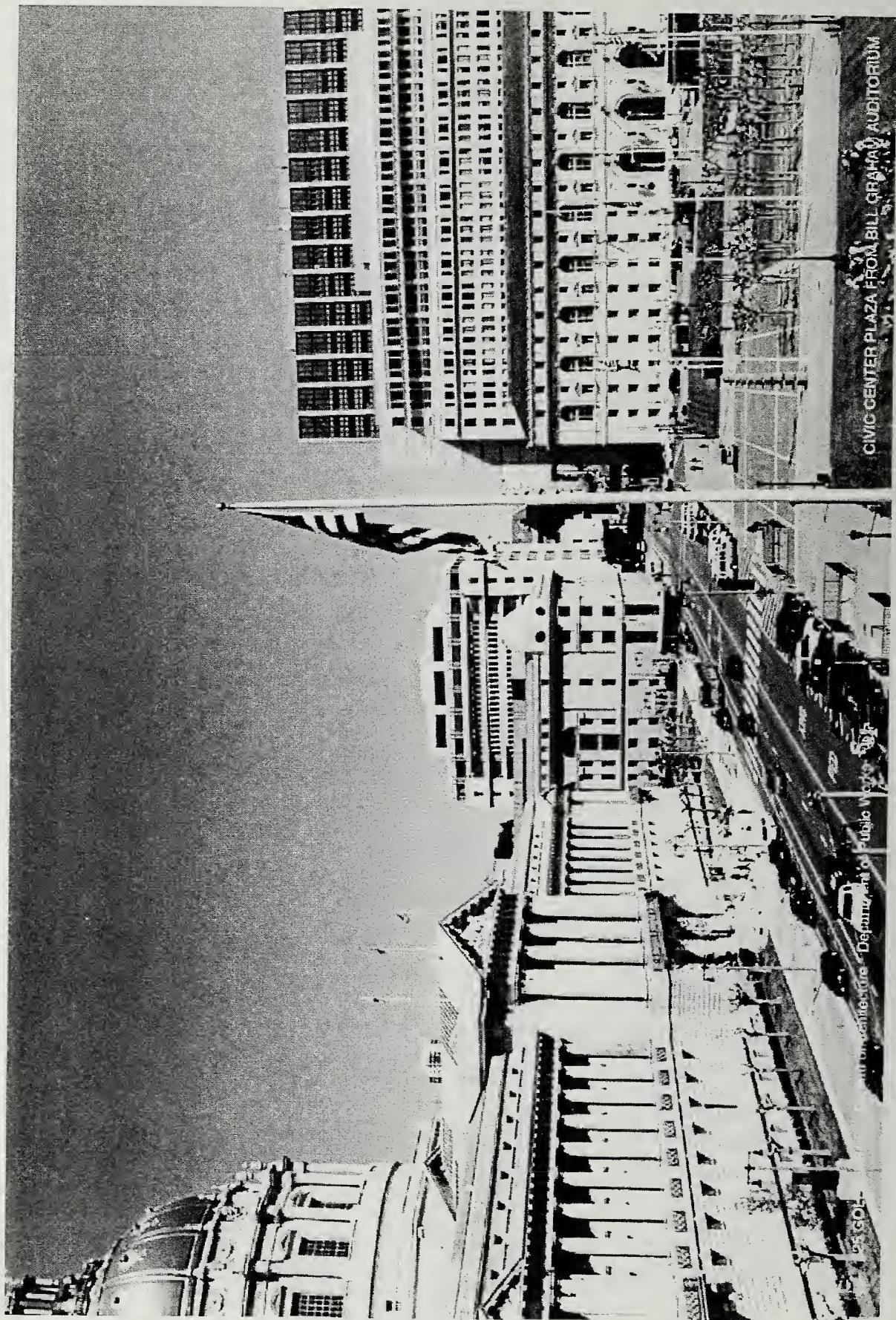


SOURCE: San Francisco Department of Public Works, Bureau of Architecture

1997-428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223

Figure 12

View of Existing Building from  
Upper Level of Bill Graham Civic Auditorium

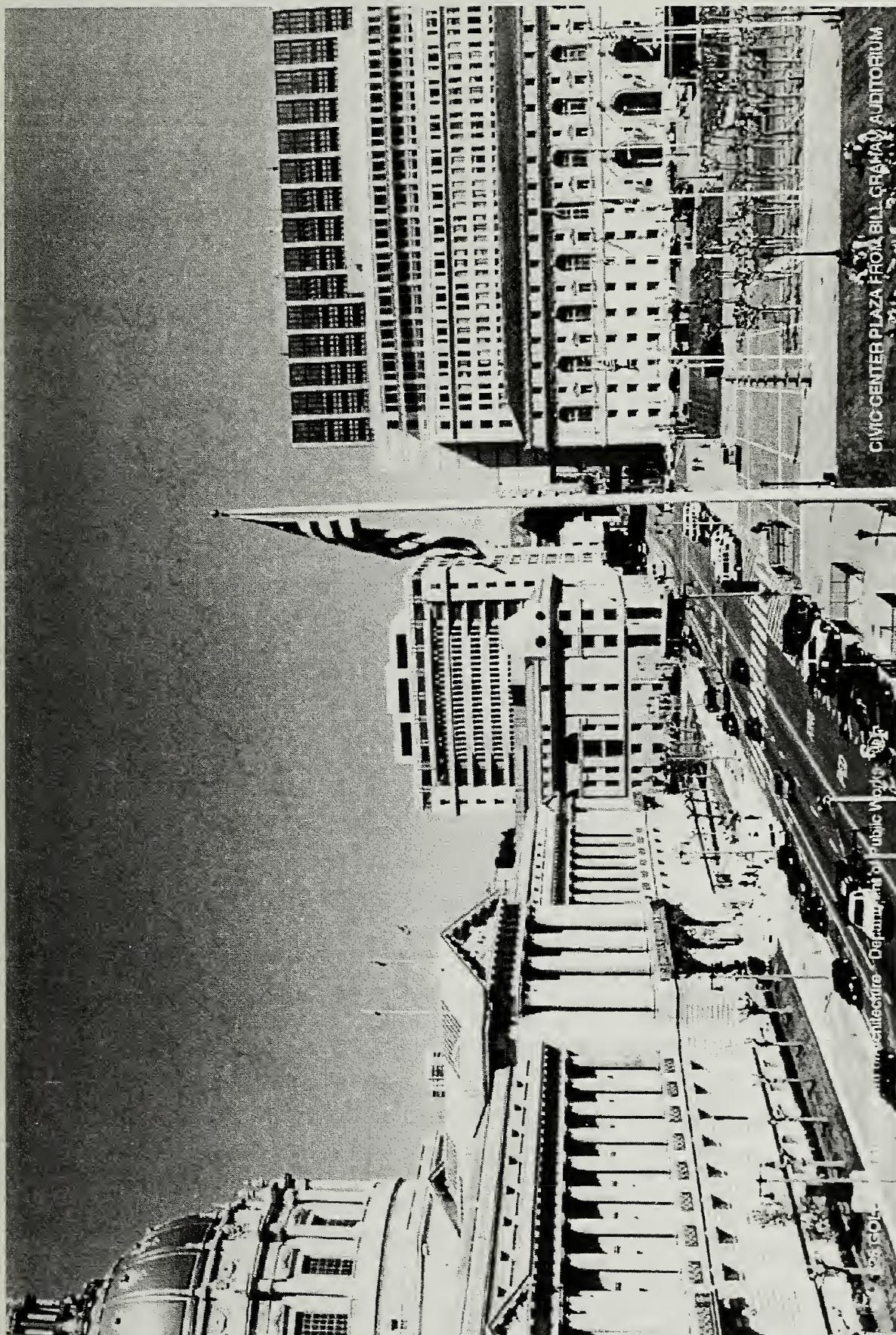


SOURCE: San Francisco Department of Public Works, Bureau of Architecture

1997.428E: S.E. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223

Figure 13

Visual Simulation of Proposed Project Viewed  
from Upper Level of Bill Graham Civic Auditorium  
Option A



1997-428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■

Figure 14

Visual Simulation of Proposed Project Viewed from Upper Level of Bill Graham Civic Auditorium Option B

SOURCE: San Francisco Department of Public Works, Bureau of Architecture

aesthetic effect, nor would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character of the site and its surroundings. Therefore, the project's effects with regard to visual quality would not be significant. Changes in the design that might occur as part of the design-build process would not likely change the development program (e.g., square footage of office space and number of workers), and therefore would not be expected to result in effects substantially different than described herein.

The project would comply with Planning Commission Resolution 9212, which prohibits the use of mirrored or reflective glass. Thus, the project would not produce glare affecting other properties.

## C. TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

A transportation study was prepared for the project and is summarized here.<sup>5</sup>

### SETTING

Within the project vicinity, McAllister Street, Van Ness Avenue, and Market Street are designated in the Transportation Element of the *San Francisco General Plan* as Transit Preferential Streets. Turk, Hayes, Fell, Franklin, Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Streets and Golden Gate and Van Ness Avenues are designated in the Transportation Element as Major Arterials; Larkin Street is designated as a Secondary Arterial. The above-designated major arterials are also part of the Congestion Management Program (CMP) Network. Eighth, Ninth, and Franklin Streets and Van Ness Avenue are also part of the Metropolitan Transportation System (MTS) Streets, Highways and Freight Network. Van Ness Avenue and Market Street are designated as Citywide Pedestrian Network Streets. Market, Turk, Polk and Larkin (south of Turk) Streets and Golden Gate Avenue are designated as Citywide Bicycle Routes in the Transportation Element of the General Plan; the San Francisco Bicycle Plan identifies Market, McAllister, Fulton (west of Octavia), Grove (east of Octavia), Polk, and Larkin (south of McAllister) Streets as recommended bicycle routes. Redwood Street, which forms the southern project site boundary, generally is one-way westbound connecting Polk Street to Van Ness Avenue, with curbside parking on the south side of the street; there is, however, a short two-way segment between the Civic Center Courthouse parking garage and Polk Street that is used by vehicles exiting the garage to access (via right turn only) Polk Street. Major streets in the area provide on-street parking on both sides, except that parking is prohibited on the near side of the streets surrounding the Phillip Burton Federal Building (Polk, Golden Gate, Larkin and Turk). All major intersections in the vicinity of the project site are traffic signal controlled; the intersection of Redwood Street and Van Ness Avenue has a stop sign on the Redwood approach.

Freeway access to and from the *East Bay* (via I-80 and the Bay Bridge) is provided via an on-ramp at Eighth and Bryant Streets, and an off-ramp at Eighth and Harrison Streets, respectively. Freeway access

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<sup>5</sup> Environmental Science Associates (ESA), *City Administrative Building – Transportation Report*, June 26, 2000. This report is available for review at the San Francisco Planning Department, 1660 Mission Street, as part of Project File No. 1997.478E!.

to the *Peninsula* (via U.S. 101) is currently provided via on-ramps at either 13th Street and South Van Ness Avenue (which also provides East Bay access), or 10th and Bryant Street. Access from the Peninsula via U.S. 101 to the project site is provided by off-ramps at either 13th and Mission Streets, or 9th and Bryant Streets. Vehicles traveling to/from the *North Bay* use Van Ness Avenue and Lombard Street (U.S. 101) between the project site and the Golden Gate Bridge.

The project site is served directly by the San Francisco Municipal Railway, and other transit services are available via a connecting MUNI line. Stops for approximately 20 MUNI bus and Metro lines are within walking distance (considered one-quarter of a mile) of the project. MUNI bus lines (local and express) operate on Larkin, Hyde, Turk, McAllister, Market, Hayes, Eighth, and Ninth Streets and on Van Ness and Golden Gate Avenues in the project vicinity. MUNI Metro light rail vehicle lines are accessible at the Civic Center Station, located at Eighth/Hyde and Market Streets (about four blocks southeast of the project site).

Golden Gate Transit provides direct service between the North Bay and the Transbay Terminal, via Golden Gate Avenue and McAllister Street in the site vicinity. Golden Gate Transit also provides ferry service to terminals in Larkspur and Sausalito from the Ferry Building (about two miles east of the site), and operates a shuttle service from the Ferry Building to the Civic Center area. Other regional transit service to the site is provided to and from the East Bay by BART at the Civic Center Station on Market Street, about four blocks southeast of the site. BART also links Daly City / Colma and southern areas of San Francisco with the Civic Center. AC Transit does not have any stops in the immediate vicinity of the project site; however, this carrier, which stops at the Transbay Terminal, can be reached by the Market Street bus lines or MUNI Metro lines. SamTrans, the San Mateo County operator, provides transit service to the Peninsula, serving the Civic Center area directly. The Fourth and Townsend Streets terminal for Caltrain, which provides service to the Peninsula and San Jose, is accessible from the Civic Center area via the MUNI 42-Downtown Loop on Van Ness Avenue.

Surveys of existing parking capacity and occupancy were taken in the area bounded by Eddy, Franklin, Grove and Hyde Streets. There are approximately 1,180 parking spaces in four surface lots and two parking garages within the study area. Mid-afternoon weekday occupancy levels average about 86 percent. On-street parking in the project area is effectively at capacity.

Crosswalk widths in the vicinity of the project range from about 10 to 16 feet. In the project vicinity, noon peak period pedestrian volumes are generally heavier than the p.m. peak period volumes. The crosswalks at the intersection of Van Ness and Golden Gate Avenues currently operate in “unimpeded” conditions during the noon peak 15-minute period, and in “open” conditions during the p.m. peak 15-minute period.

In the San Francisco Bicycle Plan, Polk and Larkin Streets form a north-south signed bicycle route couplet (Route 25) that continues south of Market Street on 10th and 11th Street, the latter of which has a bicycle lane in each direction. McAllister and Grove Streets similarly form an east-west couplet (Route 20), and Market Street is signed as Route 50 in both directions. Seventh and Eighth Streets

(Route 23) and Turk Street (Route 20) also are designated bicycle routes. Bicycle traffic is noticeable on Market Street in the inbound direction during the morning peak, and in the outbound direction during the afternoon peak. The Civic Center Garage, beneath Civic Center Plaza, provides a no-cost, dedicated area for bicycle parking; however, usage is typically limited to fewer than 10 bicycles per day.

## IMPACTS

### **SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA**

City policy has been that a project is considered to have a significant effect on the environment if it would cause a signalized intersection to deteriorate to an unacceptable level (i.e., from Level of Service (LOS) D or better to LOS E or F), interfere with existing transportation systems causing substantial alteration to circulation patterns or causing major traffic hazards, or contribute substantially to cumulative traffic increases that cause intersections that would otherwise operate at acceptable levels to deteriorate to unacceptable levels. The City has not formally adopted significance criteria for potential impacts related to transit, but City policy has been that a project would have a significant effect if it would cause a substantial increase in transit demand that cannot be accommodated by existing or proposed transit capacity, resulting in unacceptable levels of transit service. Regarding parking, San Francisco General Plan policies emphasize the importance of public transit use and discourage the provision of facilities that encourage automobile use. Downtown San Francisco enjoys a high level of transit accessibility, and visitors and employees who come to the area have alternatives to the use of private automobiles. Therefore, the creation of or increase in parking demand resulting from a proposed project that cannot be met by existing or proposed parking facilities would not itself be considered a significant effect. The City has not adopted significance criteria for pedestrian or bicycle impacts. For this analysis, the project would have a significant effect if it were to result in substantial pedestrian overcrowding, create particularly hazardous conditions for pedestrians or bicyclists, or otherwise substantially interfere with pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. Generally, construction-period transportation impacts would not be considered significant because they would be temporary.

## **IMPACT ANALYSIS**

### **Travel Demand Analysis**

Two development scenarios were examined for estimation of project travel demand for each of the two project options, *i.e.*, (1) City departments housed at the site would not include high visitor level activity, and (2) the departments would include high visitor level activity. (High visitor activity would include departments that routinely provide on-site services to the public such as issuing permits, collecting fees, etc. Low visitor activity would include departments that routinely provide support services to other City departments or agencies.)

TABLE 2  
TRAVEL DEMAND (PERSON TRIP ENDS) BY MODE TYPE

Travel Mode	Daily		P.M. Peak-Hour <sup>a</sup>	
	Person Trips	Vehicle Trips <sup>b</sup>	Person Trips	Vehicle Trips <sup>b</sup>
<b>OPTION A (14 stories):</b>				
<u>Scenario 1 (Option A without High Visitor Level Activity)</u>				
Auto	2,105	1,740	305	245
Transit	1,525		290	
Other <sup>c</sup>	<u>410</u>		<u>60</u>	
TOTAL	4,040		655	
<u>Scenario 2 (Option A with High Visitor Level Activity)</u>				
Auto	2,550	2,120	330	265
Transit	1,750		305	
Other <sup>c</sup>	<u>500</u>		<u>60</u>	
TOTAL	4,800		695	
<b>OPTION B (12 stories):</b>				
<u>Scenario 1 (Option B without High Visitor Level Activity)</u>				
Auto	1,910	1,580	265	215
Transit	1,350		250	
Other <sup>c</sup>	<u>370</u>		<u>50</u>	
TOTAL	3,630		565	
<u>Scenario 2 (Option B with High Visitor Level Activity)</u>				
Auto	2,315	1,925	290	235
Transit	1,555		260	
Other <sup>c</sup>	<u>450</u>		<u>55</u>	
TOTAL	4,320		605	

<sup>a</sup> The p.m. peak hour occurs during the two-hour peak period of 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

<sup>b</sup> The number of vehicle trips is less than the number of person-trips by auto because some vehicle trips carry more than one person (i.e., carpool, vanpool, etc.)

<sup>c</sup> "Other" for the current analysis represents Walk, Bicycle, Motorcycle, Taxi, Limo, etc.

SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates, using data in the Planning Department guidelines, and the *San Francisco City Hall Employee Travel Behavior Survey*.

Projected daily, and inbound and outbound p.m. peak-hour trips by mode expected to be generated by the project (under both of the above-described scenarios) are shown in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, the number of daily person trips would range from a low of approximately 3,600 (for Option B, assuming low visitor activity departments would occupy the building) to a high of about 4,800 (for Option A, assuming high visitor activity departments would occupy the building). (The existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue office building has been vacant since the Loma Prieta earthquake, and therefore, all of the project trips are considered new trips to the site.) Although expressed on a person trip-end basis, the trip generation includes all travel to and from the project in autos, on public transit, by foot, and by other modes (*e.g.*, bicycles, taxis, etc.). The project would generate between about 1,580 and 2,120 daily vehicle trips, depending on the option approved and the scenario assumed, and between about 215 and 265 vehicle trips in the p.m. peak hour. Transit ridership in the p.m. peak hour would be between about 250 and 305, depending on the option and scenario.

## Traffic Impacts

Existing traffic operations in the area were characterized using a p.m. peak-hour level of service (LOS) analysis. This analysis provides a standardized means of assessing an intersection's operations based on traffic volumes, intersection capacity and delays. A LOS scale has been established from LOS A (free-flow conditions, with little or no delay) to LOS F (congested conditions, with extremely long delays); LOS D is considered the lowest acceptable level in San Francisco.

This report assumes, for purposes of a conservative analysis, that opening of the new City Administrative Building would result in re-occupancy of some of the existing private office space currently leased by the City. The City occupies parts of numerous buildings in the greater Civic Center. In addition, this analysis assumes completion of the Asian Art Museum project at the old Main Library building, completion of a new federal office building planned for construction at Seventh and Mission Streets, and completion of an approved mixed-use project at 600 Van Ness Avenue at Golden Gate Avenue.

All of the five signalized study intersections currently operate at LOS C or better (low to moderate delays) during the p.m. peak hour, which is good to very good operating conditions (see Table 3). As shown in Table 3, operating conditions at the study intersections would not worsen from existing conditions with the addition of approved development projects (see “2000 without Project” column), except at the intersection of Van Ness and Golden Gate Avenues, where the service level would drop from LOS C to LOS D under all scenarios. As stated above, however, LOS D is considered to be acceptable operations in San Francisco, and therefore project traffic impacts would be less than significant.

**TABLE 3**  
**PM PEAK-HOUR INTERSECTION LEVELS OF SERVICE (LOS) AND  
AVERAGE STOPPED DELAY IN SECONDS PER VEHICLE (S/V)  
(EXISTING AND FUTURE CONDITIONS)**

Signalized Intersections	Existing (1997)	2000 w/o Project		2000 with Project				Cumulative (2015) <sup>b</sup>				
		Scenario 1 <sup>a</sup>	Scenario 2 <sup>a</sup>	Scenario 1 <sup>a</sup>	Scenario 2 <sup>a</sup>	LOS	Delay <sup>c</sup>	LOS	Delay <sup>c</sup>	LOS	Delay <sup>c</sup>	
<b>Option A (14 stories)</b>												
Van Ness Avenue / Golden Gate Avenue	B	12.4	C	20.9	D	27.8	D	28.0	E	42.6	E	43.0
Van Ness Avenue / McAllister Street	B	8.5	B	9.5	B	9.6	B	9.6	B	10.1	B	10.1
Van Ness Avenue / Hayes Street	C	18.2	C	19.1	C	19.7	C	19.7	C	21.6	C	21.6
Larkin Street / Golden Gate Avenue	B	8.9	B	9.2	B	9.2	B	9.2	B	9.6	B	9.6
Market / Tenth / Polk / Fell Streets	B	11.5	B	11.6	B	11.6	B	11.6	B	11.9	B	11.9
<b>Option B (12 stories)</b>												
Van Ness Avenue / Golden Gate Avenue	B	12.4	C	20.9	D	26.6	D	26.8	E	40.9	E	41.3
Van Ness Avenue / McAllister Street	B	8.5	B	9.5	B	9.6	B	9.6	B	10.1	B	10.1
Van Ness Avenue / Hayes Street	C	18.2	C	19.1	C	19.6	C	19.6	C	21.4	C	21.5
Larkin Street / Golden Gate Avenue	B	8.9	B	9.2	B	9.2	B	9.2	B	9.6	B	9.6
Market / Tenth / Polk / Fell Streets	B	11.5	B	11.6	B	11.6	B	11.6	B	11.9	B	11.9

<sup>a</sup> Scenario 1 assumes that the City departments housed at the project site would not include those with high visitor level activity; Scenario 2 assumes that the City departments housed at the project site would include those with high visitor level activity.

<sup>b</sup> Year 2015 levels of service represent conditions that assume (1) that the Central Freeway will end at an at-grade intersection with Market Street, with a surface street connection (via Octavia Street) to the Oak-Fell corridor, and that reflect (2A) a background traffic growth rate of one-half percent per year (i.e., 9.4 percent for 1997-2015) in cases when traffic generated by the proposed project plus approved projects in the area makes up less than half of the background traffic growth; and (2B) traffic growth of 9.4 percent above existing volumes *plus* project-specific traffic makes up more than half of the background traffic growth.

<sup>c</sup> Average Stopped Delay expressed in terms of Seconds per Vehicle.

SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates

Projected traffic conditions in 2015 were derived by extrapolating existing traffic volumes (adjusted to reflect the voter-approved Octavia Boulevard) by a traffic growth rate of 0.5 percent per year, plus specific projects approved to be built in the project vicinity. As shown in Table 2, under 2015 conditions, p.m. peak-hour traffic conditions at the intersection of Van Ness Avenue / Golden Gate Avenue would degrade to an unacceptable LOS E, also under all scenarios. This would be a significant cumulative impact, to which the project would contribute considerably. A potential mitigation measure to shift some project traffic away from the intersection of Van Ness Avenue / Golden Gate Avenue, conversion of Redwood Street to one-way eastbound traffic flow, has been identified (see p. 72) that would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. Conditions at other study intersections would not worsen from Year 2000 Without Project conditions with the addition of traffic from the built-out project, and would operate at LOS D or better.

## Transit Impacts

As shown in Table 2, the project would generate between about 250 and 305 transit trips in the p.m. peak hour. MUNI routes that serve the project area currently operate (in the peak direction at the Maximum Load Points) with an aggregate p.m. peak-period capacity utilization of 64 percent on bus lines running east-west; 61 percent on bus lines running north-south; and 69 percent on Metro and Historic Trolley lines running under and on Market Street. These capacity utilizations fall within MUNI's established level of service standard of 100 percent, which assumes a substantial number of standees on each vehicle type. On the basis of frequency-of-service data, there are about 95 buses and 45 Metro / Historic Trolleys on the lines serving the project area in the p.m. peak hour. Addition of the project peak-hour MUNI riders would increase percent capacity utilization, but would not alter peak-direction transit loadings to the degree that MUNI level of service standards would be exceeded because the riders would be dispersed among the various MUNI lines, and riders would travel in both the peak and the non-peak directions. This does not mean, however, that project impacts on MUNI would not be perceptible. The project would contribute to crowding at some times, and an individual's experience on certain lines and at certain times could be in apparent conflict with the overall conditions described above. Addition of riders from the project onto regional transit carriers would not be measurable against the day-to-day fluctuations in transit ridership, and no project-specific significant effect would result. The project would, however, contribute to cumulative increases in transit ridership that would result in a marginal increase in loading ratios. However, the project contribution would not be "considerable" (about 15 riders per line, averaged over the 20 nearby MUNI lines), and the project effect therefore would not be significant.

## Parking Impacts

The proposed project is within a P (Public Uses) zoning district, in which off-street parking is required for office space in accordance with the Planning Code, in the amount of one space per 500 sq. ft. of occupied floor area, where the occupied floor area exceeds 5,000 sq. ft.. Under this standard, the project would be required to provide a total of 392 to 465 spaces, depending on the option approved. The proposed project would provide 100 off-street parking spaces (about 140 spaces with valet parking).

Accordingly, the sponsor will request a variance from the Planning Code requirement. Code Section 155(i) requires one disabled-accessible space for each 25 off-street parking spaces provided. The project would provide the required four disabled-accessible spaces. The building would contain bicycle parking, in compliance with Code Section 155.1, and would provide showers and lockers, in compliance with Code Section 155.3. Parking requirements are summarized in Table 4.

Parking demand was projected for the proposed project on the basis of the estimated vehicular traffic generated by the project. As shown in Table 4, the project would create a demand for between 345 and 430 parking spaces, depending on the development option and the level of visitors assumed. (Each parking demand figure includes long-term (employee) and short-term (visitor) parking.) As stated above, the project proposes 100 off-street parking spaces (up to 140 spaces with valet operations), resulting in an unmet demand of about 255 to 290 parking spaces for Option A, or 205 to 235 spaces for Option B, depending on the visitor activity. This deficit would need to be accommodated in other off-street parking facilities, but existing on-street parking conditions are essentially fully occupied, based on field observations. A parking inventory and occupancy survey of the area within two blocks of the project site indicated that the 1,180 combined off-street parking spaces, in surface lots and garages, are currently about 86 percent occupied during the mid-afternoon period, leaving about 165 unoccupied spaces available within the survey area. The 205 to 290 drivers that would seek parking in the surrounding parking facilities would use any remaining vacant spaces in these off-street parking facilities, and would result in a deficit of between 40 and 125 spaces in the vicinity, assuming no change in travel modal split (e.g., from auto to transit). This parking space deficit would result in drivers that come to the area parking farther away from their destination, would cause an increase in illegal on-street parking, or may cause parkers to change travel modes. The deficit could also encourage operators of existing parking facilities, such as the Civic Center Plaza Garage and the Opera Plaza Garage, to consider the use of valet parking to increase the available supply, at least during periods of peak demand. A long-term effect of the parking deficit would be to discourage auto use and encourage use of local transit. San Francisco General Plan policies emphasize the importance of public transit use and discourage the provision of facilities that encourage automobile use to minimize the environmental impact of traffic congestion, noise, and air quality associated with unconstrained vehicle use. Therefore, the creation of or increase in parking demand resulting from a proposed project that cannot be met by existing or proposed parking facilities, while inconvenient to persons choosing to drive to the area, would not be considered a significant effect.

### **Pedestrian and Bicycle Impacts**

Pedestrian access to the project building would be on Golden Gate Avenue and Polk Street. The project at full occupancy would generate up to about 155 new pedestrian trips (with Option A and assuming high visitor activity) on sidewalks and crosswalks during the 15-minute peak-period of the noon hour, and about 70 new pedestrian trips during the p.m. peak 15-minute period. Operating conditions on crosswalks are evaluated in terms of pedestrian flow categories or regimen, which relate the density of

**TABLE 4**  
**PLANNING CODE PARKING REQUIREMENTS, PARKING DEMAND,**  
**AND PROPOSED PARKING**

Requirement	Option A	Option B		
Occupied Floor Area <sup>a</sup>	232,650 sq. ft.	196,200 sq. ft.		
Parking spaces required	465	392		
Parking spaces proposed (valet spaces)	100 (140)	100 (140)		
Shortfall: Supply vs. Requirement <sup>b</sup>	365	292		
Disabled-accessible spaces required <sup>c</sup>	4	4		
Disabled-accessible spaces proposed	4	4		
Bicycle spaces required – Class 1 / Class 2 <sup>d</sup>	29 / 8	24 / 8		
Bicycle spaces proposed	29 / 8	24 / 8		
<hr/>				
Demand	Option A	Option B		
	Low Visitor Activity	High Visitor Activity	Low Visitor Activity	High Visitor Activity
Parking Demand	395	430	345	375
Shortfall: Supply vs. Demand <sup>e</sup>	255	290	205	235

<sup>a</sup> Excludes lobby, parking, and mechanical floor, and assumes 90 occupied-to-gross ratio for remainder.  
<sup>b</sup> Shortfall based on independently accessible spaces, as required by Code.  
<sup>c</sup> One per 25 spaces provided  
<sup>d</sup> Class 1 spaces – locker, covered monitored parking, or similar; Class 2 spaces – rack. Requirement based on number of employees (Planning Code Sec. 155.1).  
<sup>e</sup> Shortfall based on valet spaces (maximum available on-site parking).

pedestrians in a specific time period (pedestrians per foot of crosswalk width per minute) to the quality of pedestrian flow (*i.e.*, the difficulty of maintaining walking paths and speeds on a crosswalk). Conditions on the four crosswalks at the Van Ness and Golden Gate Avenues intersection, following addition of the project pedestrian travel, would be same as at present, *i.e.*, “unimpeded” during the noon peak period, and “open” during the p.m. peak period, except on the east side crosswalk across Golden Gate Avenue, which would drop from “open” to “unimpeded” in the p.m. peak period; all crosswalk conditions would remain acceptable. Pedestrian effects at other locations would be less intensive, and therefore project effects on pedestrian conditions would not be significant.

There are designated or recommended bicycle routes in the project vicinity (on Market, Turk, McAllister, Fulton, Grove, Polk, and Larkin Streets and Golden Gate Avenue). Bicyclists were also observed on other streets, not so designated, in the project area. The project would not be expected to generate a noticeable increase in bicycles in the area, nor would it be expected to noticeably affect

existing bicycle conditions in the area. The project would provide bicycle parking and shower and locker facilities, as required by Planning Code Sections 155.1 and 155.3. Therefore, the project would not result in any significant impacts regarding bicycles.

### **Freight Loading and Service Impacts**

Freight and service vehicle loading activity at the proposed project is anticipated to be lower than what theoretically would be expected to be generated by square footage of office space at the project site. That is due to the different characteristics of government office uses versus commercial offices (e.g., government offices may have fewer deliveries through use of a more centralized distribution system. Also, some deliveries would be local, within the Civic Center, potentially requiring less use of trucks). The project would generate a maximum total of about 16 service vehicle stops per day. Average hourly loading space needs would be about one space per hour, with peak demand of one space per hour, under all scenarios.

Under the Planning Code Section 152, the project, under all scenarios, would be required to provide two off-street (standard truck) freight loading space to serve the proposed office floor area. The proposed project would provide one loading dock for vans and small trucks off Redwood Street. Accordingly, a variance from the requirement of Section 152 of the Planning Code (minimum number of spaces) would be sought by the sponsor, as allowable in accordance with Code Section 305.

The project would meet the average and peak demand for about one loading space per hour, if delivery/service calls were made by van-type vehicles. To the extent full-size trucks were used, delivery/service vehicles would seek on-street space on Golden Gate Avenue and Polk Street. The absence of on-street yellow-curb loading spaces in proximity to the project site would prevent delivery trucks from pulling to the curb, thereby affecting traffic flow on Golden Gate when the trucks double-parked in the right-most of the three travel lanes. The project sponsor could request the Department of Parking and Traffic to designate a metered loading space (for a full-size truck with a 30-minute limit from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., or another time period appropriate for deliveries to the City departments to be housed in the building). However, given the anticipated lower-than-normal level of loading activity for this building, effects would not be anticipated to be significant.

The use of Redwood Street as access to this building's loading space could create conflicts with vehicles using Redwood Street as access for the Civic Center Courthouse parking and loading space. As stated above, however, the project would generate a maximum total of about 16 service vehicle stops per day, and at that level of activity, the potential for substantial delays for drivers accessing the Courthouse space would be low, and the impact would be less-than-significant.

### **Construction Impacts**

During the construction period, temporary and intermittent transportation impacts would result from truck movements to and from the project site during demolition, excavation and construction activities

associated with construction of the proposed building. Truck movements during periods of peak traffic flow would have greater potential to create conflicts than during non-peak hours because of the greater numbers of vehicles on the streets during the peak hour that would have to maneuver around queued trucks; these effects could be reduced by the project sponsor requiring construction truck traffic to be restricted to non-peak hours, as approved by the Department of Parking and Traffic (DPT). These impacts, however, would be intermittent and therefore not significant. The project sponsor could meet with MUNI, DPT, and other responsible city agencies and other project construction managers in the area to coordinate construction activities so as to minimize construction impacts on vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

During demolition of the existing building, the sidewalks fronting the project site on Polk Street and Golden Gate Avenue would be closed to pedestrians; signs would be erected to direct pedestrians to sidewalks on the opposite side of the street(s). During most of the remainder of construction (*i.e.*, excluding the final Tenant Improvements phase), these sidewalks would be closed, but the curb lanes on Polk and Golden Gate would be expected to be closed to provide protected pedestrian walkways. Lane and sidewalk closures are subject to review and approval by the Department of Parking and Traffic and the Department of Public Works, respectively.

The use of Redwood Street for material storage during project construction would create conflicts with vehicles using Redwood Street. It is expected that Redwood Street would be closed to through traffic during construction with service vehicles for buildings at the west end of Redwood Street required to back out onto Van Ness Avenue (temporarily eliminating the one-way westbound control on Redwood) after completing their service stop (as was the case during construction of the Courthouse). Access for judges to the Courthouse's on-site parking spaces would be maintained to and from Polk Street. Activation of the gate controlling access to the Courthouse parking, currently performed at a box on a pedestal on the north (project) side of Redwood would have to be temporarily modified during project construction. The Courthouse on-site loading dock on Redwood Street would be inaccessible during project construction. Loading activity associated with the Courthouse, however, is primarily generated by van-type vehicles, which typically use the front of the building (on Polk and McAllister Streets) instead of the loading dock. Therefore, the effect on loading activity for the Courthouse would be minimal.

The highest number of construction workers would be an average of about 100 workers per day for much of the project construction period. Parking of construction workers' vehicles would temporarily increase occupancy levels in off-street parking lots and garages, either by those vehicles or by vehicles currently parking in on-street spaces that would be displaced by construction workers' vehicles. However, construction worker parking would generate less demand than would operation of the new building, once complete. Construction impacts would be temporary, and would not be significant.

## Conclusion

In general, while the design of the proposed City Administrative Building is subject to some revision as part of the design-build process, no changes to the development program (e.g., square footage of office space and number of workers) are expected that would result in effects outside the range of impacts discussed in this section. In summary, therefore, the project would not result in a significant unmitigable impact on transportation, circulation or parking.

## D. SHADOW

### SETTING

Existing public open space in the project vicinity includes Civic Center Plaza, one block southeast of the project site; the War Memorial Court, between the Opera House and Veterans' Building in the War Memorial Complex on Van Ness Avenue; and United Nations Plaza, which extends from Hyde Street to Market Street generally in the Fulton Street right-of-way. The building setback in front of the Phillip Burton Federal Building on Golden Gate Avenue between Polk and Larkin Streets (across the Polk / Golden Gate intersection from the project site), while not designated open space, has long functioned as a plaza, and has recently been renovated to make it more pedestrian-friendly. In the project vicinity, Civic Center Plaza is the only park protected by the Sunlight Ordinance (Section 295 of the City Planning Code). In addition, the recently opened Tenderloin Community (elementary) school on Turk Street, one-half block northwest of the project site, includes outdoor play areas along Elm Street and atop of the school building itself.

### SUNLIGHT ORDINANCE

Section 295 of the Planning Code, the Sunlight Ordinance, was adopted through voter approval of Proposition K in November 1994 to protect certain public open spaces from shadowing by new structures. Section 295 prohibits the issuance of building permits for structures or additions to structures greater than 40 feet in height that would shade property under the jurisdiction of or designated to be acquired by the Recreation and Park Commission, during the period from one hour after sunrise to one hour before sunset, unless the Planning and Recreation and Park Commissions determine that such shade would have an insignificant impact on the use of such property. Civic Center Plaza is the only public park potentially subject to shading by the project.

In 1989, the Planning and Recreation and Park Commissions adopted shadow criteria for Downtown parks, including an Absolute Cumulative Limit for new shadow for each open space and set forth qualitative criteria for assessing new shadow. The Absolute Cumulative Limit for Civic Center Plaza was set at 1 percent additional shadow-foot-hours per year. Qualitative criteria call for preservation of afternoon sun, particularly on seating areas and lawn areas.

Since the Absolute Cumulative Limit and the criteria were adopted, the New Main Library at Larkin and Grove Streets and the Civic Center Courthouse at Polk and McAllister Street have been constructed. These two projects together absorbed the allowable 1 percent new shadow on Civic Center Plaza. Therefore, in 1999, the Absolute Cumulative Limit for Civic Center Plaza was adjusted to 1.12 percent to accommodate the proposed addition to the old Main Library building of a rooftop mechanical penthouse as part of planned reuse of the building for the Asian Art Museum.

## IMPACTS

### **SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA**

Planning Code Section 295 generally prohibits new buildings that would cause significant new shadow on open space under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission between one hour after sunrise and one hour before sunset, at any time of the year. A project would have a significant effect if it would result in substantial new shadow on public open space under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Commission during these hours.

### **IMPACT ANALYSIS**

#### **Civic Center Plaza**

To determine whether this project would conform to Section 295, a shadow fan analysis was performed by the Planning Department. This analysis determined that the project shadow could extend as far as the one nearby public open space subject to Section 295, Civic Center Plaza.

The project could produce new shadow on Civic Center Plaza for 40 minutes or less for portions of the daily periods between about 7:10 p.m. and 7:35 p.m., from May 13 through June 21 each year. The percentage of new shadow relative to total sunlight available (in 1989, when the original standard was adopted) on Civic Center Plaza would be 0.002 percent or less, depending on whether Option A or Option B were approved. The proposed City Administrative Building, in combination with the new Main Library, the new Civic Center Courthouse, and relocation of the Asian Art Museum to the former Main Library building (and associated improvements to the old Main Library building) would fit within the current 1.12 percent increment of new shadow permitted on Civic Center Plaza, regardless of which option were approved for the City Administrative Building.

The new shadow cast on Civic Center Plaza by the project would occur at the end of the day, during the last hour of the period covered by Section 295 (that is, during the last hour before one hour prior to sunset). As shown in Figure 15, project shadow would fall on the northeast corner of the Plaza, including the northernmost portion of the Civic Center Tot Lot (playground). Because the new project shadow would be within the 1.12 percent Absolute Cumulative Limit for Civic Center Plaza, and because the new project shadow would occur in the early evening, after 7:00 p.m., the additional shadow would not be expected to interfere with use of the Plaza, nor would it conflict with the qualitative criteria that,

as noted, call for preservation of afternoon sun. Therefore, the project would not result in a significant effect regarding shadow.

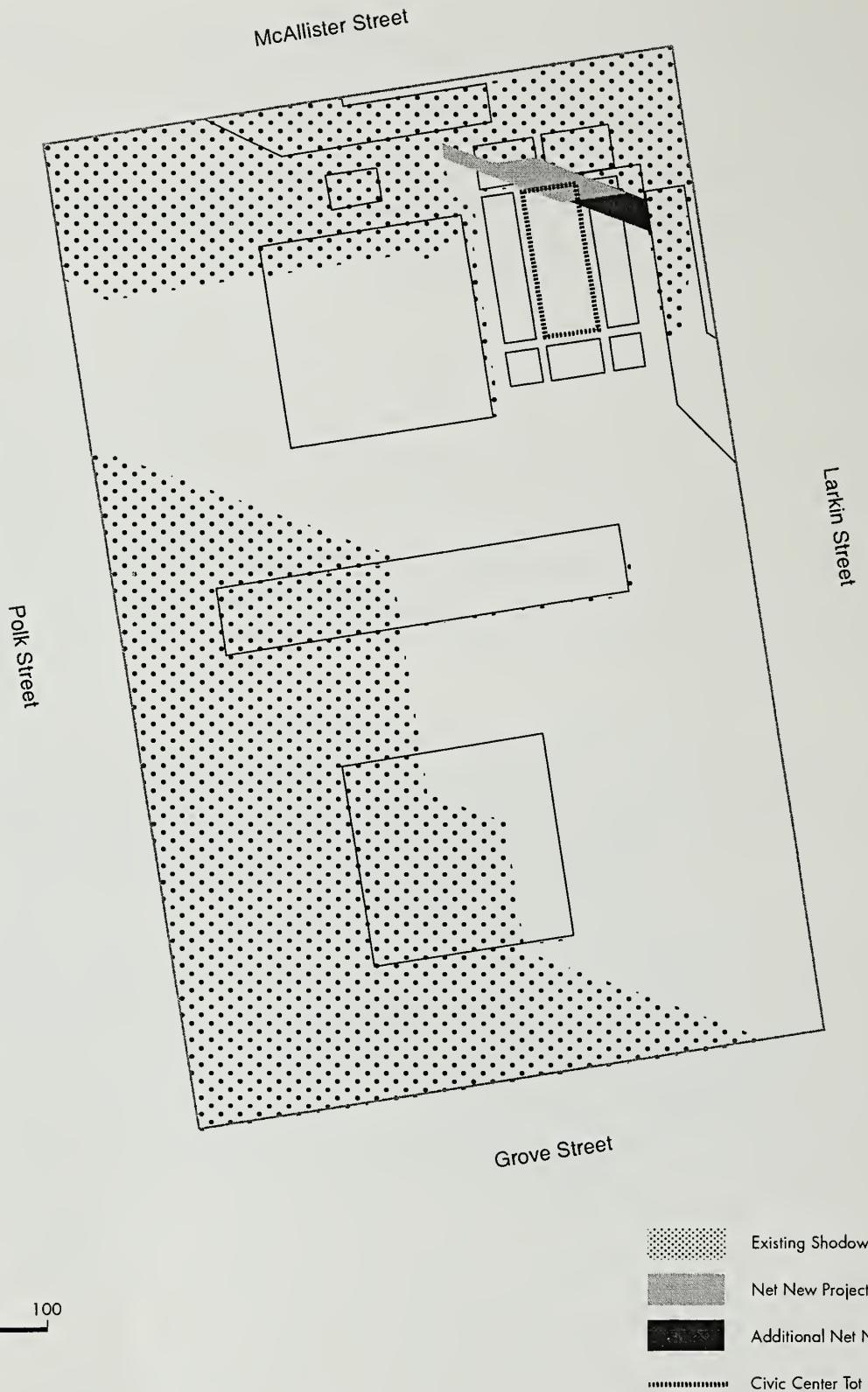
### Tenderloin Community School

Open spaces at schools are not subject to Planning Code Section 295. The following discussion is provided for additional information on potential project shadow effects. However, project shadow on school open spaces would not be considered a significant effect.

In addition to new shadow on Civic Center Plaza, the project would cast new shadow on surrounding streets and sidewalks, as does the existing vacant building at 525 Golden Gate Avenue. Because the project site is completely covered by the existing building, the primary project effect relative to shadow would be to increase the distance from the site where shading would occur, owing to the greater height of the proposed project. Because the longest shadows from any project occur early in the morning and late in the afternoon when the sun is lowest, project effects would be limited because other buildings would also cast longer shadows on locations that the project might otherwise shadow at those times. However, both options under consideration for the City Administrative Building project would cast additional shadow, compared to existing conditions, on the new Tenderloin Community School, located on the block to the north of the project site.

The project would cast new shadow on the school play areas, which are located on the building roof and at street level on Elm Street, in the morning hours between early fall and late winter. As shown in Figures 16 through 18, pp. 59 - 61, the greatest extent of project shadow on the new school would occur in December, when project shadows would be longest. At 9:00 a.m. on December 21 (the winter solstice), the shorter Option B would almost fully shade the rooftop play area on the school's west building, which is mostly in sunlight at that time under existing conditions (see Figure 16). Option A, with two additional stories, would fully shade this play area. The east rooftop play area would remain in sunlight with Option B, but its westernmost approximately 35 feet would be shaded by Option A. (The ground-level play areas along Elm Street are shaded by existing buildings.) By 10:00 a.m., shadows would shorten sufficiently that neither option would cast new shadow on the rooftop play areas (see Figure 17). The shorter Option B would complete shading of the western ground-level play area, which is partially shaded at present, and would also add new shadow to the eastern ground-level play area, which is mostly shaded under existing conditions. The taller Option A would complete shading of the eastern ground-level play area. By 12:00 noon, shadows would be short enough so that Option B would cast no new shadow on the school, while Option A would add a small amount of shadow (less than 500 square feet) to the eastern portion of the east ground-level play area (see Figure 18). Both rooftops and the remainder of the ground-level play areas would be in sunlight.

As the calendar moves through winter, shadows would shorten. Two months later, on February 21, the project would cast a small amount of new shadow on portions of the school play areas. At 9:00 a.m., the taller Option A would add new shadow to the western ground-level play area, but the shorter Option B would add no new shadow. Both rooftop play areas are mostly in sun at this time under existing

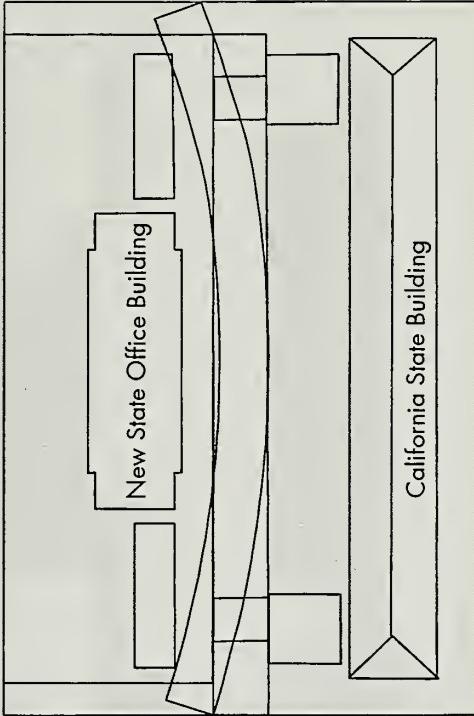
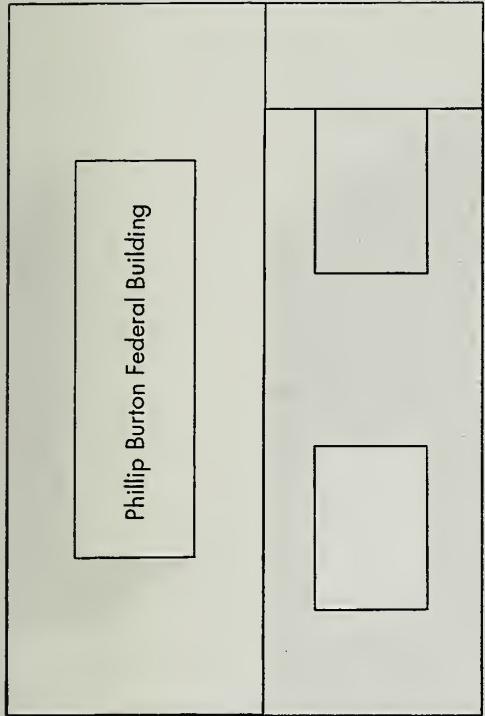


SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates

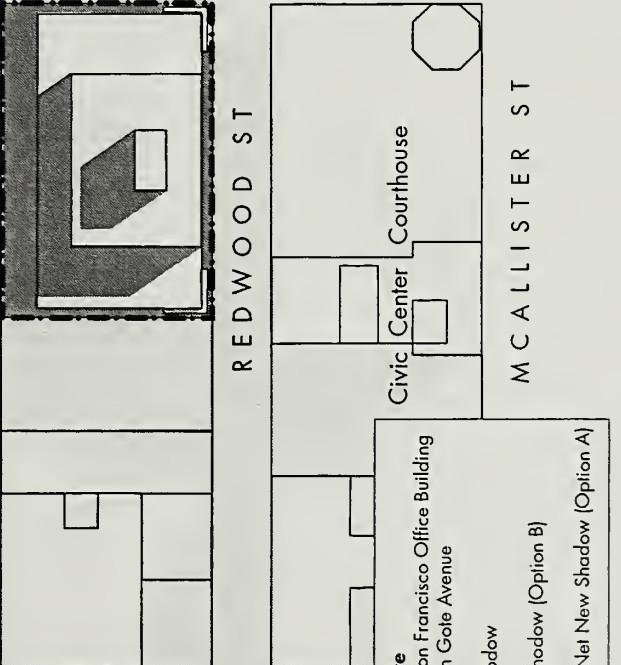
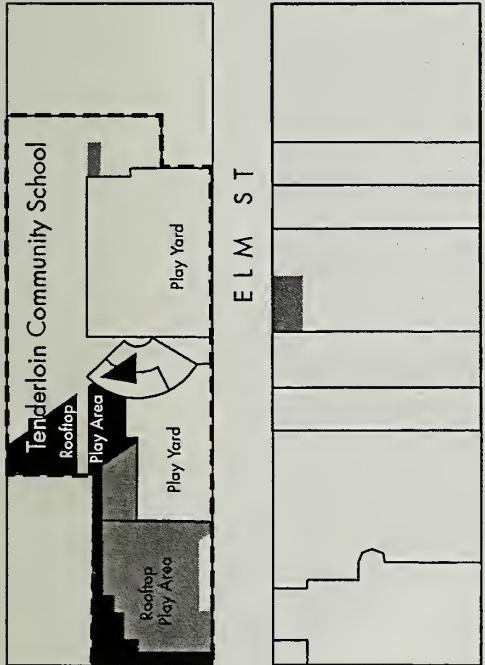
1997.428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 / ESA 960223 ■

**Figure 15**  
Maximum Extent of Net New Project  
Shadow on Civic Center Plaza  
(June 21, 7:20pm)

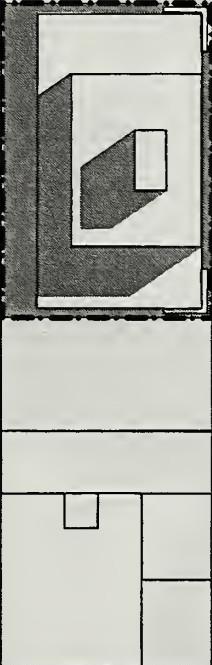
L A R K I N   S T



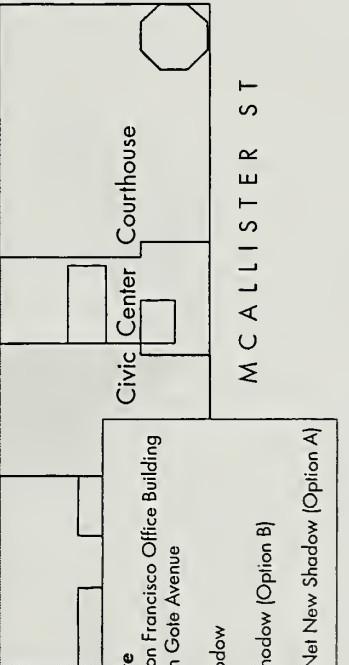
P O L K   S T



G O L D E N   G A T E   A V E



R E D W O O D   S T



V A N   N E S S   A V E

- — Project Site  
Proposed Son Francisco Office Building  
525 Golden Gate Avenue
- Existing Shadow
- Net New Shadow (Option B)
- Additional Net New Shadow (Option A)

SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates

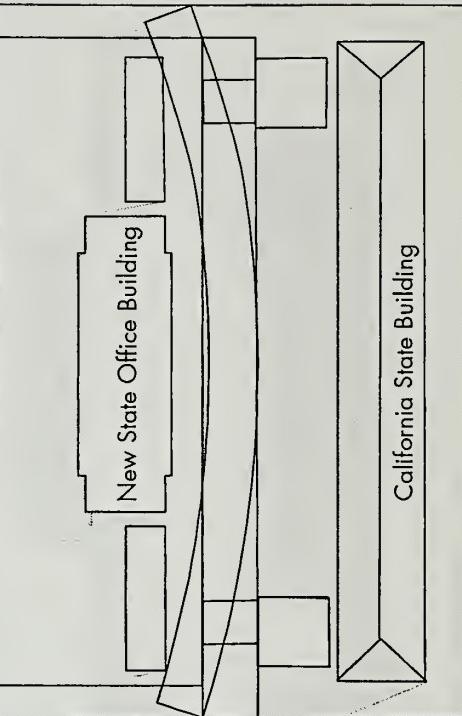
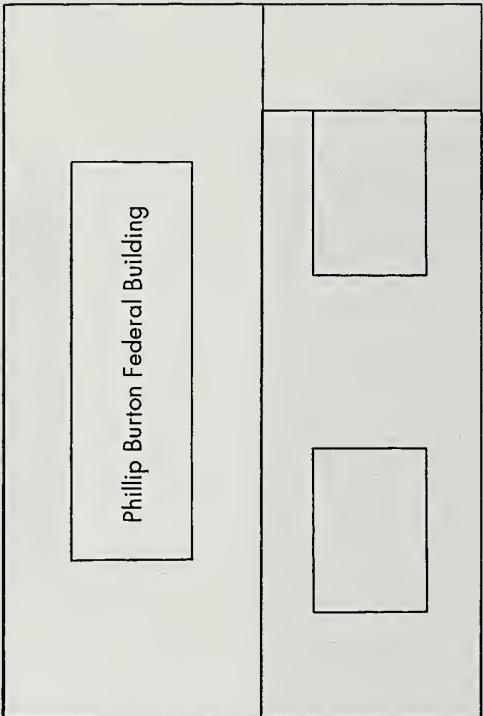
S.F. City Administrative Building / 960223 ■

Figure 16

December 21 Shadow Casts

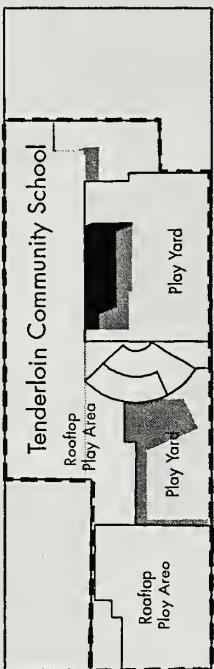
9 am

LARKIN ST

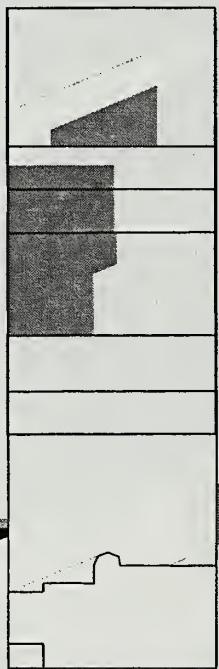


S.F. City Administrative Building / 960223 ■  
Figure 17  
December 21 Shadow Casts  
10 am

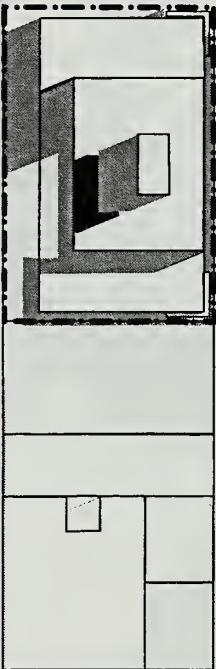
TURK ST



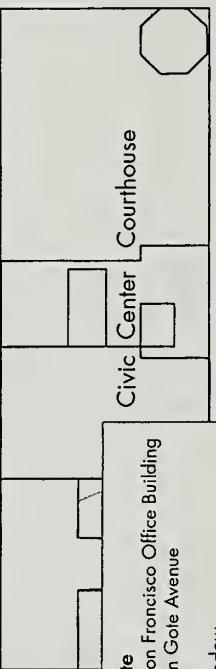
ELM ST



GOLDEN GATE AVE



REDWOOD ST



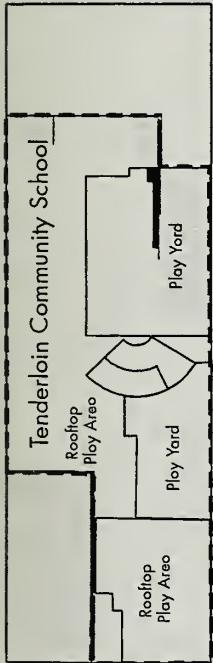
M C A L L I S T E R S T

- Project Site  
Proposed San Francisco Office Building  
525 Golden Gate Avenue
- Existing Shadow
  - Net New Shadow (Option B)
  - Additional Net New Shadow (Option A)

VAN NESS AVE

SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates

TURK ST

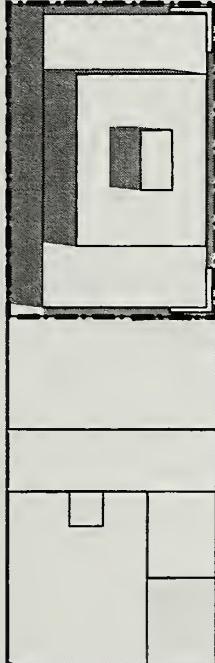


ELM ST

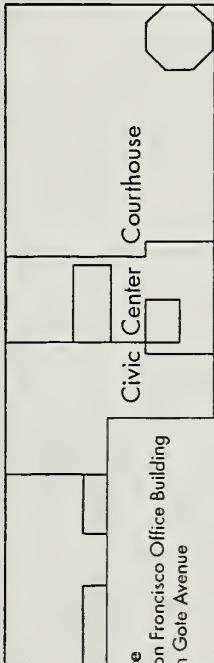


VAN NESS AVE

GOLDEN GATE AVE



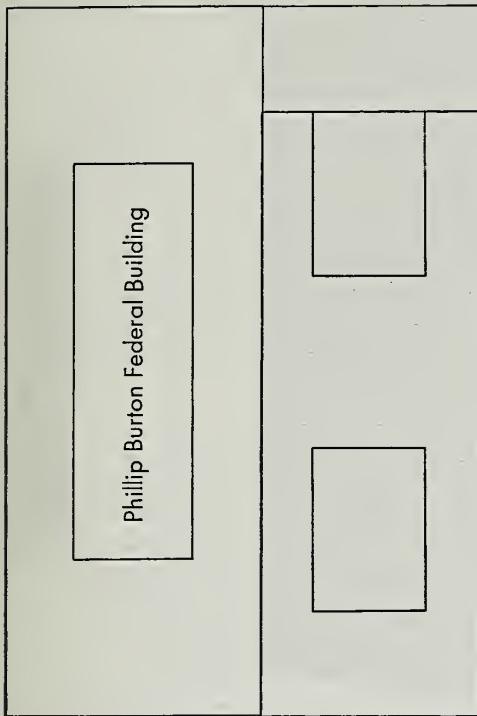
REDWOOD ST



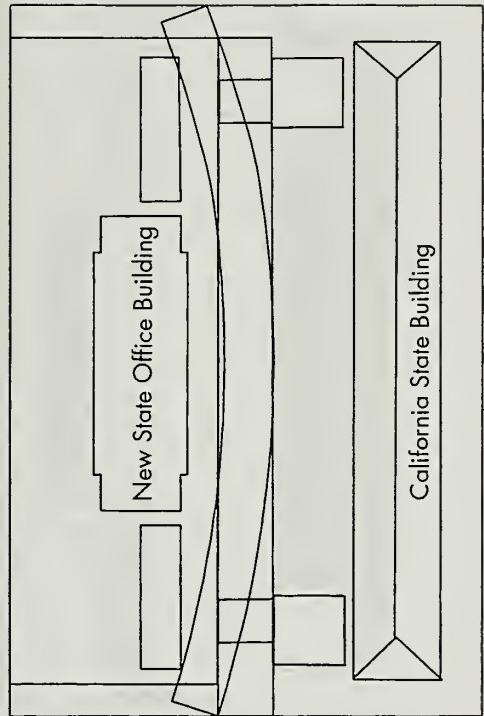
- Project Site  
Proposed San Francisco Office Building  
525 Golden Gate Avenue
- Existing Shadow
- Net New Shadow (Option B)
- Additional Net New Shadow (Option A)

SOURCER: Environmental Science Associates

LARKIN ST



POLK ST



S.F. City Administrative Building / 960223 ■  
Figure 18  
December 21 Shadow Casts  
12 Noon

conditions, and neither option would add new shadow to the roof (see Figure 19). By 10:00 a.m., shadows from both options would be too short to shade either the rooftop or ground-level play areas (see Figure 20). The rooftops would remain in sun, as would most of the ground-level play areas. Similarly, at noon in February, neither option would shade the school at all (see Figure 21). Shadow conditions in late fall would be similar to those in early winter, accounting for sun time. That is, shadows on October 21 would be similar to those on February 21, except that mid-February's 9:00 a.m. shadows would occur at 10:00 a.m. in mid-October due to daylight savings time. The project would add no new shadow to the Tenderloin Community School on or after March 21, the spring equinox, nor would it add shadow to the school on or before September 21, the autumnal equinox.

As noted previously, the open spaces at the school are not subject to Planning Code Section 295. Therefore, project shadow would not be considered a significant effect. Further, the project would never result in complete shading of the school's outdoor open spaces except for the early morning hours (9:00 a.m. and earlier) in late fall and early winter (around the first day of winter), when the taller Option A would result in near-complete shadow. Even in late fall and early winter, by 10:00 a.m., substantial areas of the school's open space would be in sunlight, and would remain in sunlight throughout the year. Mitigation is identified in Chapter IV (see p. 73) to ensure that any changes to the building design would not result in shadow effects that would be substantially more adverse than identified herein.

### Federal Building Plaza

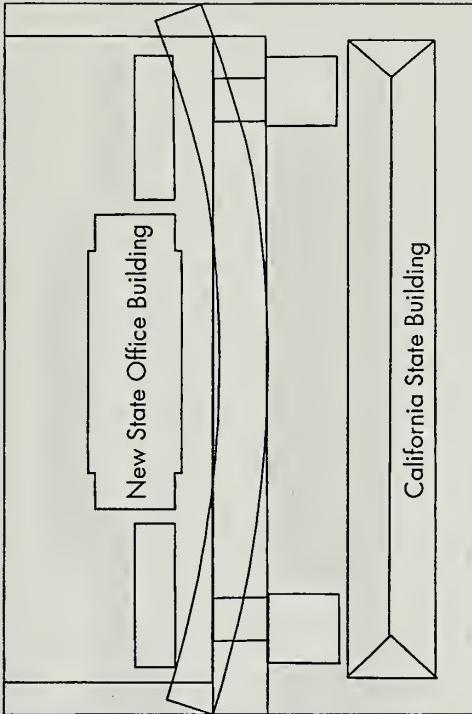
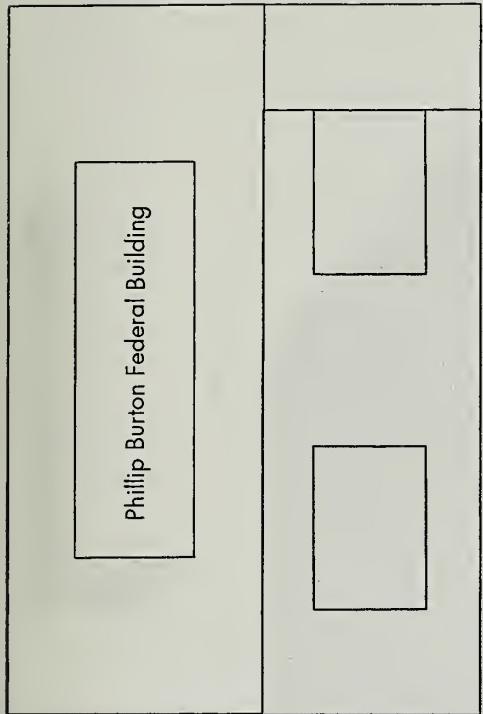
As with the Tenderloin Community School open spaces, the Federal Building plaza is not subject to Planning Code Section 295, and shadow effects on the plaza would not be considered significant. The following discussion is provided for information.

The project would also cast new shadow, compared to existing conditions, on the newly renovated plaza at the Phillip Burton Federal Building, diagonally across the Polk / Golden Gate intersection from the project site, during the afternoon hours year-round, except in late spring and early summer, when project shadows would not reach the plaza.<sup>6</sup> However, the plaza is currently partially shaded during the afternoon by the existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building except between early spring and late summer. Therefore, project effects would be greatest during late winter to early spring and late summer to early fall. Closer to the winter solstice, the plaza is substantially shaded by existing buildings and the project increment of new shadow would be more limited. Because this open space is not subject to Planning Code Section 295, this new shadow would not be considered a significant effect. Mitigation is identified in Chapter IV (see p. 73) to ensure that any changes to the building design would not result in shadow effects that would be substantially more adverse than identified herein.

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<sup>6</sup> Note that project shadow would affect Phillip Burton Plaza later in the day than the hours when project shadow would reach the Tenderloin Community School, and therefore shadow on Burton Plaza is not indicated in Figures 9-14.

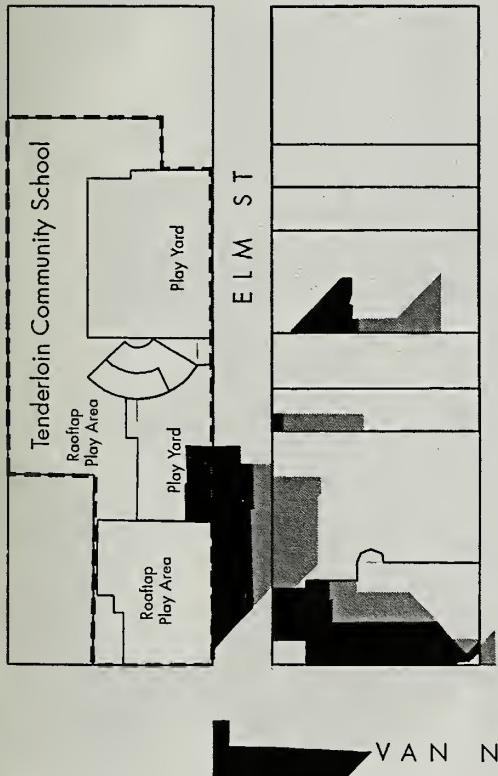
LARKIN ST



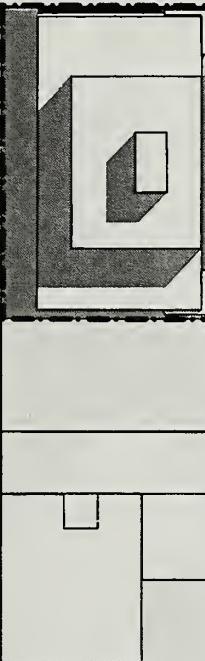
S.F. City Administrative Building / 960223 ■  
February 21 Shadow Casts  
9 am

Figure 19

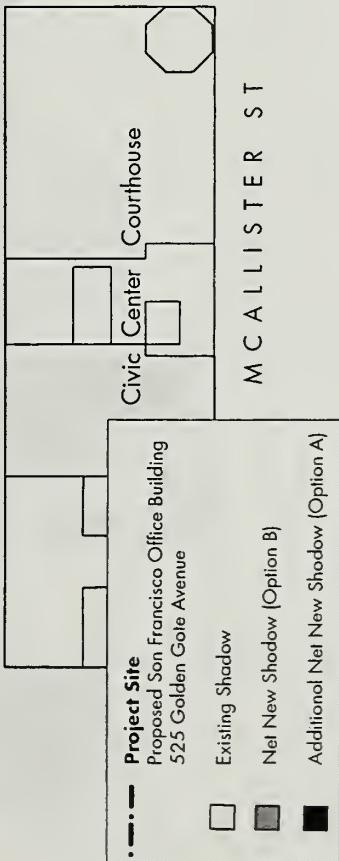
TURK ST



GOLDEN GATE AVE

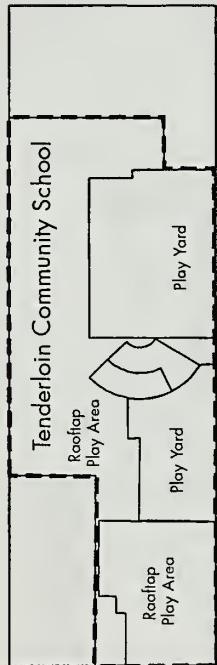


REDWOOD ST

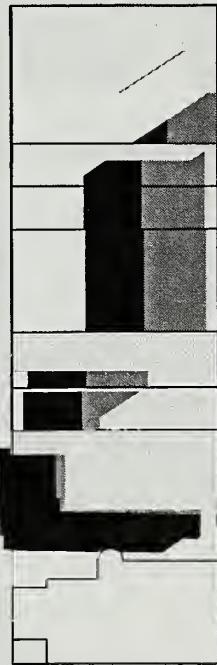


SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates

TURK ST



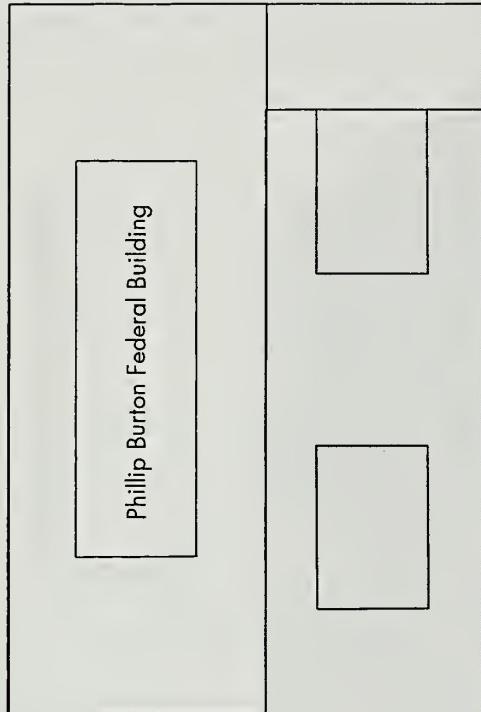
ELM ST



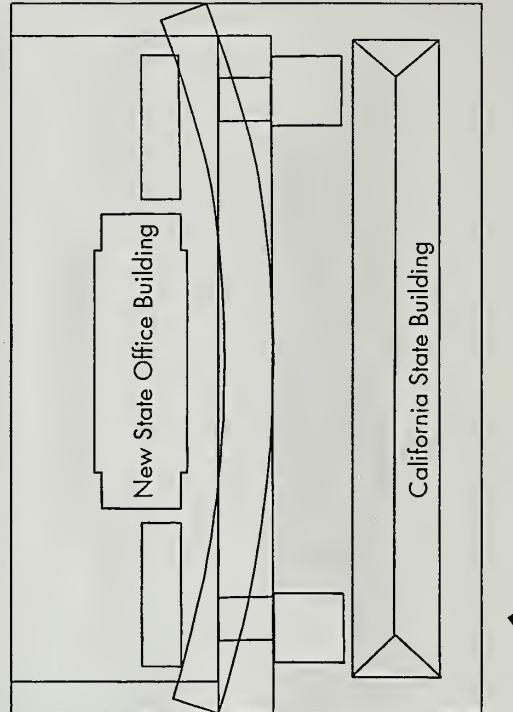
GOLDEN GATE AVE

VAN NESS AVE

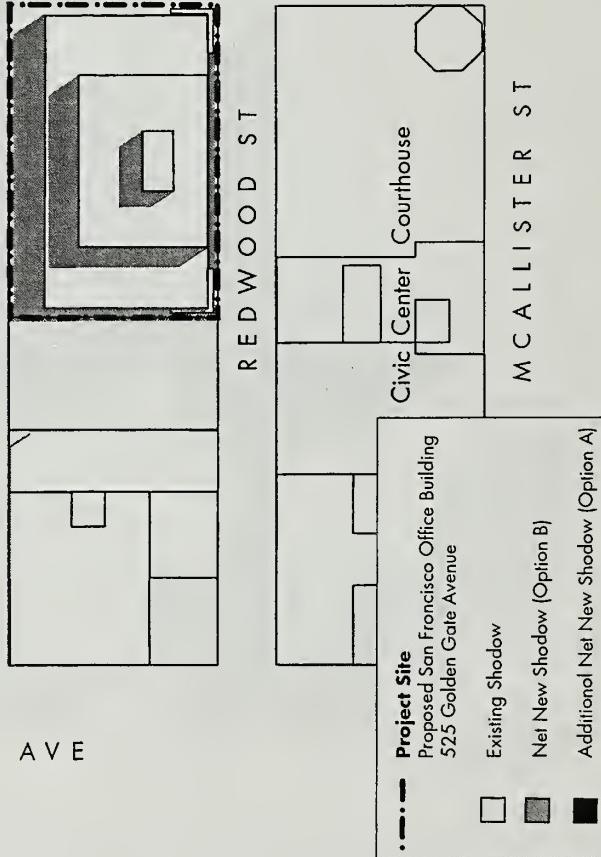
POLK ST



LARKIN ST



0 100  
Feet



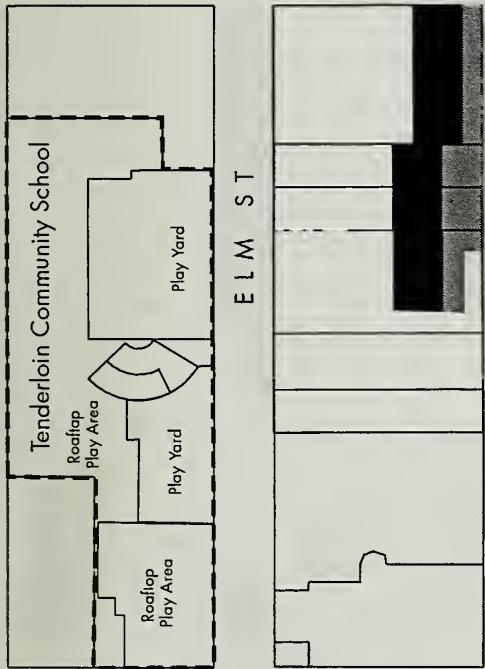
SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates

■ Figure 20  
February 21 Shadow Casts

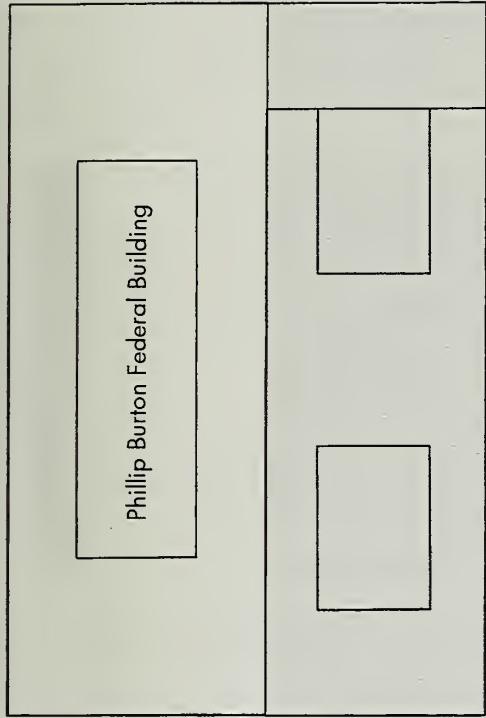
10 am  
■ Figure 21 Shadow Casts  
February 21 Shadow Casts

S.F. City Administrative Building / 960223

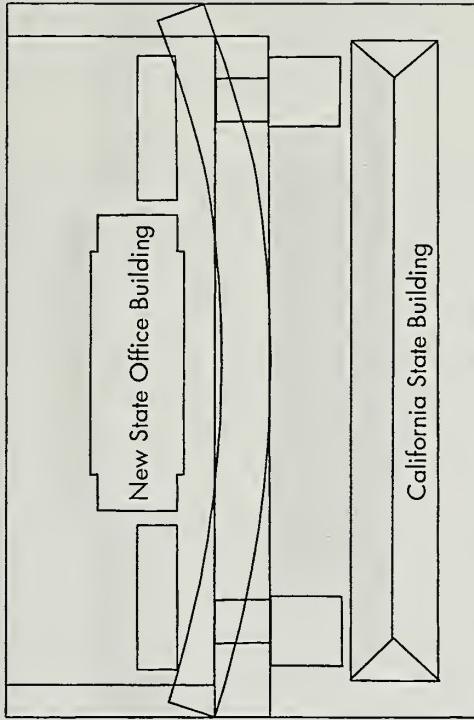
TURK ST



POLK ST



LARKIN ST



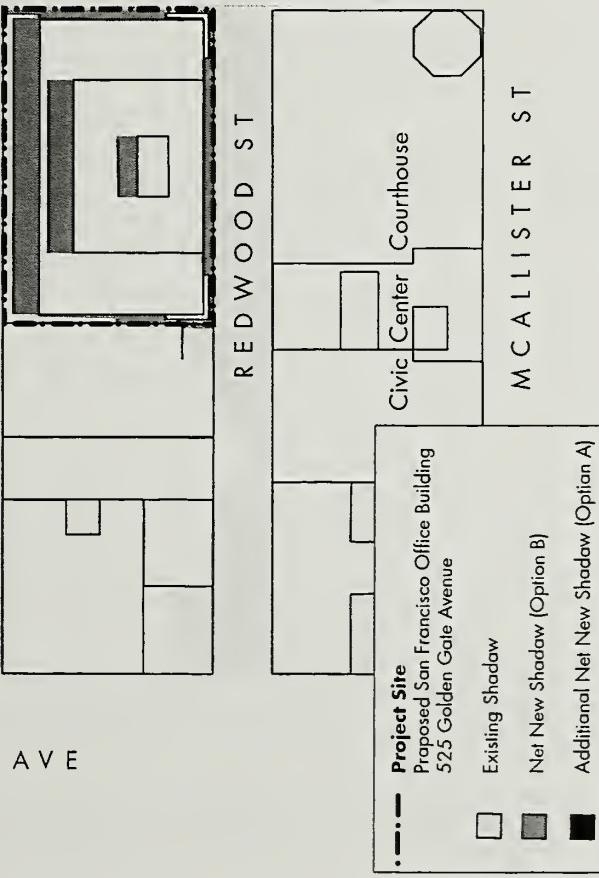
↑  
0 100  
Feet

SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates

S.F. City Adminstrative Building / 960223 ■

Figure 21  
February 21 Shadow Casts  
12 Noon

VAN NESS AVE



## E. WIND<sup>7</sup>

### SETTING

U.S. Weather Bureau and Bay Area Air Quality Management District data show that westerly (i.e., from the west) to northwesterly winds are the most frequent and strongest winds during all seasons in San Francisco.<sup>8</sup> Of the 16 primary wind directions measured at the old Weather Bureau station (at a height of 132 feet), four directions comprise the greatest frequency of occurrence as well as the majority of strong wind occurrences; these are northwest, west-northwest, west and west-southwest. Calm conditions occur about two percent of the time.

Average wind speeds are the highest during summer and lowest during winter. Strongest peak winds occur in winter when speeds of 47 miles per hour (mph) have been recorded (Null, 1978). The highest average wind speeds occur in mid-afternoon and the lowest occur in early morning.

The comfort of pedestrians varies under different conditions of sun exposure, temperature, clothing, and wind speed. Winds up to four mph have no noticeable effect on pedestrian comfort. With velocity from four to eight mph, wind is felt on the face. Winds from 8 to 13 mph will disturb hair, cause clothing to flap, and extend a light flag mounted on a pole, while winds from 13 to 19 mph will raise loose paper, dust and dry soil, and will disarrange hair. For wind velocities from 19 to 26 mph, the force of the wind will be felt on the body. At 26 to 34 mph, umbrellas are used with difficulty; hair is blown straight; there is difficulty in walking steadily; and wind noise is unpleasant. Winds over 34 mph increase difficulty with balance and gusts can blow people over.

Tall buildings and structures can strongly affect the wind environment for pedestrians. Groups of structures tend to slow the winds near ground level, due to the friction and drag of the structures themselves on winds. Buildings that are much taller than their surrounding buildings intercept and redirect winds that might otherwise flow overhead, and bring them down the vertical face of the building to ground level, where they create ground-level wind and turbulence. These redirected winds can be relatively strong and also relatively turbulent, and can be incompatible with the intended uses of nearby ground-level spaces. In addition, building designs that present tall flat surfaces square to strong winds can create ground-level winds that can prove to be hazardous to pedestrians in the vicinity.

In order to provide a comfortable wind environment for people in San Francisco, the City established specific comfort criteria to be used in the evaluation of proposed buildings. The City Planning Code

<sup>7</sup> This analysis is summarized from a Technical Memorandum prepared by Environmental Science Associates, September 21, 2000, that is available for public review at the San Francisco Planning Department, 1660 Mission Street, in Case File No. 1997.478E.

<sup>8</sup> The U.S. Weather Bureau data used in this analysis were originally gathered at the weather station atop the Old Federal Building at 50 United Nations Plaza during the years 1945-1950. Data were taken hourly, annually for 16 wind directions. The data base, comprised of 32,795 hourly observations, is of sufficient length to provide a reliable estimate of future wind conditions in San Francisco.

specifically outlines these criteria for the Downtown Commercial (C-3) District and each of the Rincon Hill, Van Ness Avenue, and South of Market areas (Planning Code Sections 148, 249.1(a)(3), 243(c)(9), 263.11(c)).

The comfort criteria are based on pedestrian-level wind speeds that include the effects of turbulence; these are referred to as “equivalent wind speeds.” For example, Section 148 of the Planning Code establishes an equivalent wind speed (as defined in the Code) of 7 mph and 11 mph as comfort criteria for seating areas and areas of substantial pedestrian use in the Downtown commercial district. In this area, new buildings and additions to buildings may not cause ground-level winds to exceed these levels more than 10 percent of the time year round between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.<sup>9</sup> If existing wind speeds exceed the comfort level, new buildings and additions in this area must be designed to reduce ambient wind speeds to meet the requirements. Section 148 also establishes a hazard criterion, which is a 26 mph equivalent wind speed for a single full hour, or approximately 0.0114 percent of the time. Downtown buildings may not cause winds that meet or exceed this criterion.<sup>10</sup> The wind ordinance is defined in terms of equivalent wind speed, an average wind speed (mean velocity) adjusted to include the level of gustiness and turbulence.<sup>11</sup> The hazard criterion speed is stated in terms of a full-hour average speed, for which sufficient relevant data are not available. The comfort criteria are based on the available meteorological data, which have shorter averaging periods, an element of one minute. To use the available data, it is convenient to restate the hazard speed and deal with all three criteria on the same basis; when so restated, the hazard criterion wind speed becomes 36 mph<sup>12</sup>.

While the project site is not within an area governed by Planning Code wind standards, the Section 148 criteria provide an appropriate methodology and criteria for the analysis of wind effects, since it allows for a standardized measure of changes in the wind regime. Furthermore, the Section 148 criteria and the same criteria in Section 243 (for the Van Ness Avenue Special Use District) apply to locations within a few blocks of the project site with similar building forms and topography.

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<sup>9</sup> The Planning Code specifies the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. In contrast, the available weather data, as aggregated, cover the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Thus, observations from two additional evening hours and one additional morning hour are included in the wind speed distribution data.

<sup>10</sup> Because the hazard criterion is stated in terms of 1 hour of exceedance, it is most appropriate to report exceedances of this criterion in terms of the number of hours per year that the excess occurs, rather than the accompanying wind speeds. Thus, for each wind analysis, the number of locations and the total sum of the durations of exceedances of the hazard criterion are important measures of effect. This differs from reporting of both comfort criteria, for which wind speeds exceeded 10 percent of the time are examined and presented, but statistics other than the number of locations are not detailed.

<sup>11</sup> Equivalent mean wind speed incorporates the effects of gustiness or turbulence on pedestrians and is defined as the mean wind speed multiplied by the quantity (one plus three times the turbulence intensity) divided by 1.45.

<sup>12</sup> This adjustment is explained in a technical paper, “Developing the San Francisco Wind Ordinance and Its Guidelines for Compliance,” Arens et. al., 1986. This paper is available for review at the San Francisco Planning Department, 1660 Mission Street.

Existing conditions in the project vicinity are considered windy: the average wind speed<sup>13</sup> at 31 test locations is nearly 13 miles per hour (mph). It appears that the Phillip Burton Federal Building, a 300-foot-tall office building northeast of the proposed project site, controls the wind conditions in its vicinity. The Federal Building, a structure substantially higher than surrounding development, intercepts the winds that otherwise would pass overhead and brings them down to ground level, and tends to create accelerated wind conditions in its vicinity, including exceedances of the wind hazard criterion.

Wind speeds in pedestrian areas range from 7 mph to 26 mph. (Three locations were also tested within and atop the Tenderloin Community School; wind speeds there range from 7 mph to 9 mph.) In general, the highest ground-level wind speeds in the vicinity of the site occur on Polk Street between Elm Street and Golden Gate Avenue, on Golden Gate Avenue adjacent to and across the street from the Federal Building, and in the plaza in front of the Federal Building. At these locations, the mass of the Federal Building results in wind speeds as high as 26 mph and four existing exceedances of the 26-mph wind hazard criterion. The wind speeds at 15 of the 31 locations under existing conditions exceed the pedestrian-comfort criterion value of 11 mph that is contained in Planning Code Section 148.

## IMPACTS

### **SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA**

A project would normally have a significant impact if it would cause the 26-miles-per-hour wind hazard criterion to be exceeded for more than one hour per year. A project that would cause exceedances of the comfort criteria, but not the wind hazard criterion, would not be considered to have a significant impact.

### **IMPACT ANALYSIS**

In general, the project would incrementally increase wind speeds around and near the base of the new City Administrative Building by up to 4 mph, with the taller Option A resulting in incrementally more change in wind speeds. With the project, conditions would remain windy; the average wind speed at the 31 test points would increase from 12.7 mph under existing conditions to 13.5 mph with Option A and to 13.2 mph with Option B. Option A would result in wind speeds exceeding the 11-mph pedestrian comfort criterion at 20 of 31 test points and Option B would result in 18 such exceedances, compared to 15 exceedances under existing conditions. Under both options, 13 of 15 existing exceedances would

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<sup>13</sup> The term wind speed refers here to equivalent wind speed (including the effects of turbulence) that is exceeded a specified percentage of time: 10 percent of the time for pedestrian comfort comparisons and one hour per year for wind hazard comparisons.

continue and two would be eliminated, including the test point on the Polk Street sidewalk adjacent to the proposed project. Option A would result in seven new exceedances, while Option A would result in five new exceedances, compared to existing conditions. Under both options, new exceedances would occur on the Golden Gate Avenue sidewalk at the northwest corner of the project site, on the north sidewalk of Redwood Street, and at two points on the east sidewalk of Polk Street, across the street from the project site. Option A would also result in three new pedestrian criterion exceedances, including the midpoint of the project's Golden Gate Avenue sidewalk (outside the proposed project entrance), one on the north sidewalk of Golden Gate Avenue near Polk Street, and a second on Redwood Street. Option B would result in an additional new exceedance at Polk and Redwood Street.

Under Option A, winds would increase by more than 2 mph at three locations: at midpoint of the project's Golden Gate Avenue facade (4 mph) and at the northeast and northwest corners of the project site (both 3 mph). Option B would increase wind speeds by no more than 2 mph – which would be barely noticeable – at any of the 31 test points.

As under existing conditions, with each option there would be four exceedances of the 36-mph wind hazard criterion at the 31 test points. Both options would increase the number of hours during which the hazard criterion would be exceeded, from 518 hours at present to 568 hours with Option A and 626 hours with Option B. However, neither option would result in new exceedances of the hazard criterion at any of the 31 test points. High winds, including those affected by the proposed project, would generally be predictable, in that they would most often accompany wind storm conditions. As noted in the Setting, the Federal Building appears to control the wind environment in the project vicinity. Because the project would not result in any new exceedances of the wind hazard criterion, the project impact is deemed to be less than significant, assuming the design changes, if any, that result from the design-build process do not substantially alter the building envelope. Mitigation is identified in Chapter IV (see p. 73) to ensure that any changes to the building design would not result in wind effects that would be substantially more adverse than identified herein.

Wind conditions under the cumulative scenario, with construction of an approved residential project at Van Ness and Golden Gate Avenues, would not be incrementally improved. The average wind speed would be reduced by less than 0.5 mph, compared to existing-plus-project conditions. The same four exceedances of the wind hazard criterion would continue, but the number of hours exceeded would be less than with the project, and similar to existing conditions.

## F. GROWTH INDUCEMENT

In general, a project would be considered growth-inducing if its implementation would result in substantial population increases and/or new development that might not occur if the project were not approved and implemented. The proposed City Administrative Building would be developed on the site of an existing but vacant former State of California office building in an area where government office use is predominant. The project would not alter development patterns in the Civic Center area. Instead,

it would consolidate existing City offices that exist in leased office space, primarily elsewhere in the greater Civic Center.

To the extent that office space currently occupied by City staff would be vacated as a result of project occupancy, this space would incrementally increase vacancy rates for private office space in the greater Civic Center area. Given low vacancy rates for office space in San Francisco, it is probable that most of the vacated space would be occupied by other tenants if vacancy rates do not increase substantially by the time the project is complete and occupied. Because several office buildings are currently under construction or have recently been completed in San Francisco, some increase in vacancy rates will result in the next two years as these buildings open, regardless of market conditions. However, the proposed City Administrative Building project is unlikely to result in any substantial increase or decrease in demand for office space in San Francisco, given the size of the office market relative to the proposed project.

Located in a fully built-out urban area with a complete utility infrastructure and abundant public transit service, the project would not necessitate or induce the extension of municipal infrastructure or other government services. In view of the above, there is no reason to believe that the project would result in additional development in the project site vicinity or elsewhere in San Francisco that would not otherwise occur.

## G. SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

The CEQA Guidelines (Sec. 15126.2(c) and Sec. 15127) require that an EIR for projects including adoption of an ordinance by a public agency – including the rezoning proposed as part of the project – discuss the “Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes Which Would be Caused by the Proposed Project Should it be Implemented.” The Guidelines provided as examples the use of nonrenewable resources that may result in a future commitment to continue use and the potential for irreversible damage from environmental accidents associated with a project.

The proposed project, because it would require rezoning of the project site, could permanently change the development “envelope” of the project site. Although the proposed City Administrative Building itself would not necessarily be permanent, the rezoning of the site to increase the permitted height could result in a future construction on the site of a building – including potentially future private development – that would be taller than would have otherwise been permitted.

The project would irreversibly commit natural resources, including both materials and energy, to the construction of the project and resources – primarily energy - to its operation. However, the use of resources would be not be greater than for similar office development on a site that would not require rezoning. In fact, the use of resources for the proposed City Administrative Building could be incrementally less than for conventional office development because, as noted in the Project Description, the building would be developed pursuant to a pilot program for the design and construction of Resource-Efficient City Buildings, approved by the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor in 1999 (see p. 17).

# **CHAPTER IV**

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## **MITIGATION MEASURES PROPOSED TO MINIMIZE THE POTENTIAL ADVERSE IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT**

In the course of project planning and design, measures have been identified that would reduce or eliminate potential significant environmental impacts of the proposed project. In addition, because the proposed project would be constructed through a design-build process, mitigation is identified for less-than-significant shadow and wind effects of the current design, to ensure that any changes in the final design would not increase the effects described in this EIR. Some of these mitigation measures have been voluntarily adopted by the project sponsor and thus are to be implemented as part of the project. Other measures are identified as a result of this analysis but have not as yet been incorporated into the project. Each mitigation measure and its status are discussed below.

There are several items required by law that would serve to reduce or eliminate what might otherwise be potentially significant impacts. Such measures are not included as mitigation measures because the EIR compliance with applicable laws and regulations. These measures, summarized here for informational purposes, include: no use of mirrored glass on the building to reduce glare, as per City Planning Commission Resolution 9212; limitation of construction-related noise levels, pursuant to the San Francisco Noise Ordinance (Article 29 of the San Francisco Police Code, 1972); compliance with Chapter 36 of the San Francisco Building Code, Work Practices for Exterior Lead-Based Paint; and observance of State and federal OSHA safety requirements related to handling and disposal of other hazardous materials, such as asbestos.

Measures that are not required by legislation but would serve to mitigate potentially significant environmental impacts appear below.

Mitigation measures preceded by an asterisk (\*) are from the Initial Study (see Appendix A, p. A.32). The reader is directed to the Initial Study for discussion of potential impacts related to these measures.

### **A. NOISE AND VIBRATION**

#### **MEASURE PROPOSED AS PART OF THE PROJECT**

- \*A.1 If pile driving is required for the project foundation, the project sponsor will require that the project engineer include in foundation plans submitted to the Department of Building Inspection for review a requirement that piles be pre-drilled to the extent feasible, unless a soils report indicates that soil conditions are such that pre-drilling would reduce the effectiveness of the pile foundation.

## B. CONSTRUCTION AIR QUALITY

### MEASURE PROPOSED AS PART OF THE PROJECT

**\*B.1** The project sponsor would require that the contractor(s) sprinkle exterior demolition sites with water during demolition, excavation and construction activity; sprinkle unpaved exterior construction areas with water at least twice per day; cover stockpiles of soil, sand, and other material; cover trucks hauling debris, soil, sand or other such material; and sweep surrounding streets during demolition and construction at least once per day to reduce particulate emissions. Ordinance 175-91, passed by the Board of Supervisors on May 6, 1991, requires that non-potable water be used for dust control activities. Therefore, the project sponsor would require that the contractor(s) obtain reclaimed water from the Clean Water Program for this purpose.

This mitigation also would reduce demolition-related impacts regarding lead paint chips/lead dust. The project sponsor would also be required to comply with Chapter 36 of the San Francisco Building Code, Work Practices for Exterior Lead-Based Paint.

## C. TRANSPORTATION

### MEASURES PROPOSED AS PART OF THE PROJECT

**C.1** To mitigate cumulative (2015) conditions, the San Francisco Department of Parking and Traffic (DPT) would monitor traffic level of service (LOS) conditions at the Van Ness Avenue / Golden Gate Avenue intersection at a frequency of no less than every two years. At such time as warranted by traffic conditions (i.e., a degradation of the p.m. peak-hour service level to an unacceptable LOS E), DPT would shift some project traffic away from the Van Ness Avenue / Golden Gate Avenue intersection by converting Redwood Street to a one-way eastbound (from Van Ness Avenue to Polk Street) street (or implement another measure determined at that time to mitigate the cumulative degradation to LOS D or better).

Monitoring of future traffic conditions to judge the need for mitigation measures, instead of implementing the above measure immediately, is recommended because the significance threshold would be exceeded by a small margin, and because future traffic conditions are not certain. Regarding the former, the threshold of average stopped delay per vehicle between an acceptable LOS D and an unacceptable LOS E (i.e., 40.0 seconds) is projected to be exceeded by about three seconds with Option A or by about one second with Option B, with either high or low levels of visitor activity. Regarding the latter, the uncertain nature of cumulative 2015 conditions projected for this analysis (vis-à-vis the effect of the ultimate configuration of the Central Freeway and its connection to the Oak-Fell corridor on traffic patterns in the Van Ness Avenue corridor) makes it difficult to judge when or if mitigation would be necessary.

Under current one-way westbound operations, all traffic outbound from the project garage would have to travel through the Van Ness / Golden Gate Avenues intersection on the northbound approach (through or right-turn movements). If Redwood Street were converted to a one-way eastbound configuration, traffic exiting the project onto Redwood could travel either north or south on Polk Street and could avoid the

Van Ness / Golden Gate intersection. This would improve the cumulative p.m. peak-hour level of service at Van Ness / Golden Gate, compared to project conditions, to an acceptable LOS D. Other intersections in the area are expected to operate well enough that they would be able to absorb the added traffic without a significant effect on their level of service.

## D. SHADOW

### MEASURE IDENTIFIED IN THE EIR

- D.1** To ensure that shadow effects with respect to Civic Center Plaza and the Tenderloin Community School are not substantially greater than identified in the EIR, if the final design were to differ in height, setbacks, or massing from the design analyzed in this EIR, the design-build contractor shall complete a shadow study of the final project design prior to issuance of any building or site permits (exclusive of demolition permits for the existing building), should the Planning Department determine that the final design warrants such analysis. This analysis, if required, shall be submitted to the Planning Department for review prior to issuance of a building permit, and could be subject to further environmental review.

## E. WIND

- E.1** To ensure that wind effects are not substantially greater than identified in the EIR, if the final design were to differ in height, setbacks, or massing from the design analyzed in this EIR, the design-build contractor shall complete a wind-tunnel analysis of the final project design prior to issuance of any building or site permits (exclusive of demolition permits for the existing building), should the Planning Department determine that the final design warrants such analysis. This analysis, if required, shall be submitted to the Planning Department for review prior to issuance of a building permit, and could be subject to further environmental review.

### MEASURE IDENTIFIED IN THE EIR

## F. HAZARDS

### MEASURE PROPOSED AS PART OF THE PROJECT

- \*F.1** The project sponsor would ensure that building surveys for PCB-containing equipment (including elevator equipment), hydraulic oils, and fluorescent lights are performed prior to the start of demolition. Any hazardous materials so discovered would be abated according to federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

The project sponsor would also be required by law to comply with Chapter 36 of the San Francisco Building Code, Work Practices for Exterior Lead-Based Paint, and with applicable laws and regulations concerning asbestos removal (see the Initial Study in Appendix A, p. A-26).

## G. CULTURAL RESOURCES

### MEASURE PROPOSED AS PART OF THE PROJECT

\*G.1 Given the archival history of the project site, the project sponsor would retain an historical archaeologist, who would be present during site excavation and would record observations in a permanent log. The Environmental Review Officer (ERO) would also require cooperation of the project sponsor in assisting such further investigations on site as may be appropriate prior to or during project excavation, even if this results in a delay in excavation activities.

Should archeological resources of potential significance be found during ground disturbance, the project sponsor would immediately notify the ERO and would suspend any excavation that the ERO determined might damage such archaeological resources. Excavation or construction activities that might damage discovered cultural resources would be suspended for a total maximum of four weeks over the course of construction.

The archaeologist would prepare a draft report containing an assessment of the potential significance of the find and recommendations for what measures should be implemented to minimize potential effects on archaeological resources. Based on this report, the ERO would recommend specific additional mitigation measures to be implemented by the project sponsor.

Mitigation measures might include a site security program, additional on-site investigations by the archaeologist, and/or documentation, preservation, and recovery of cultural materials. Finally, the archaeologist would prepare a draft report documenting the cultural resources that were discovered, an evaluation as to their significance, and a description as to how any archaeological testing, exploration and/or recovery program was conducted.

Copies of all draft reports prepared according to this mitigation measure would be sent first and directly to the ERO for review. Following approval by the ERO, copies of the final report(s) would be sent by the archaeologist directly to the President of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System. Three copies of the final archaeology report(s) shall be submitted to the Office of Environmental Review, accompanied by copies of the transmittals documenting its distribution to the President of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and the Northwest Information Center.

# **CHAPTER V**

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## **SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

In accordance with Section 21067 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and with Sections 15040, 15081 and 15082 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the purpose of this chapter is to identify environmental impacts that could not be eliminated or reduced to an insignificant level by mitigation measures included as part of the project, or by other mitigation measures that could be implemented, as described in Chapter IV, Mitigation Measures, pp. 71-74.

With the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in Chapter IV, Mitigation Measures, pp. 71-74, all potential significant impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

The finding that potential significant impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels by implementation of these mitigation measures is subject to final determination by the Planning Commission as part of its certification process for the EIR. The Final EIR will be revised, if necessary, to reflect the findings of the Commission.

# **CHAPTER VI**

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## **ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

This chapter identifies alternatives to the proposed project and discusses environmental impacts associated with each alternative. Project decision-makers could adopt any of the following alternatives, if feasible, and if necessary to substantially lessen or avoid a significant environmental impact, instead of approving the project as proposed. The determination of feasibility will be made by project decision-makers on the basis of substantial evidence in the record, which shall include, but not be limited to, information presented in this EIR and in comments received on the Draft EIR.

The following alternatives are evaluated in this chapter: No Project, Rehabilitation of Existing Building, Project with No Parking, Height and Bulk Limit Compliance, and Off-Site Alternative.

At the conclusion of this chapter, Table 4 (p. 83) presents a comparison of key impacts of the alternatives to those of the proposed project.

### **A. ALTERNATIVE A: NO PROJECT**

#### **DESCRIPTION**

This alternative would entail no immediate change to the site, which would remain in its existing condition for the foreseeable future. The existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building, which has already been acquired by the City, would not be demolished by the City. No rezoning would occur with this alternative. Under this alternative, the City might choose to sell the site, or might put forth another proposal for reuse of the existing building or demolition of the building and development of some other use on the site.

#### **IMPACTS**

Unless the 525 Golden Gate Avenue building were upgraded to accommodate other tenants or demolished, there would be no temporary construction impacts, such as noise, dust and construction traffic. Unless the building were re-occupied, this alternative would not result in any new travel to and from the site. There would be no project-specific effects on intersection conditions, transit use, parking, loading, or pedestrian or bicycle traffic. (These impacts all would be less-than-significant, with mitigation, with the proposed project.)

This alternative would not result in any of the less-than-significant impacts related to shadow or wind that would occur with the proposed project. Unlike the proposed project, it would not add new shadow

to Civic Center Plaza, the Tenderloin Community School, or the Federal Building plaza, nor would it result in any change in wind speeds. Also, this alternative would not affect views from Civic Center Plaza. Additionally, with this alternative, none of the impacts described in the Initial Study, such as an incremental increase in emissions of criteria air pollutants, would occur. Other less-than-significant effects described in the Initial Study, including generation of noise and vibration during construction and potential discovery of subsurface cultural resources during excavation, among other impacts, would not occur with this alternative. Conditions in the immediate future would be reflective of conditions described in the setting sections of this report.

As noted in the Project Description, the 525 Golden Gate Avenue building sustained damage to its facade and interior in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Therefore, the building would require a substantial amount of work prior to reoccupancy (see Alternative B), and it is possible that under the No Project Alternative, the building eventually would be demolished. Should demolition be undertaken by a project sponsor other than the City and County of San Francisco, office use would be a likely future scenario for the site.

The No Project Alternative would be environmentally superior to the project, at least over the near term, because it would avoid the environmental impacts of the project, including less-than-significant impacts such as new shadow on Civic Center Plaza and on the Tenderloin Community School; however, as noted in Chapters IV and V, the proposed project would not generate any significant unavoidable environmental effects since the project would include mitigation measures to avoid all potentially significant effects. In addition, while the project would make a considerable incremental contribution to a cumulative traffic impact, the impact could be mitigated.

## B. ALTERNATIVE B: REHABILITATION OF EXISTING BUILDING

### DESCRIPTION

This alternative would rehabilitate and reuse the existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building for City offices. No on-site parking would be provided. This alternative would provide an office building of about 184,000 square feet, compared to 215,000 to 255,500 square feet (excluding parking) with the proposed project. As stated in the Project Description, the existing building has a relatively inefficient floor plan and the net decrease in usable space under this alternative, compared to the project, would be between about 31,000 and 71,500 square feet, with a greater decrease in usable office space. No rezoning would be required with this alternative, unlike the proposed project.

In a 1995 analysis of reuse of the existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building, the State of California Department of General Services determined the existing building would have to undergo required seismic retrofit and full hazardous materials abatement and would need to be renovated for long-term occupancy (20+ years), brought up to code, provided with tenant improvements, and programmed for office space at current state (or in the case of this alternative, City) standards. Included in this

rehabilitation would be: soils stabilization for seismic retrofit; seismic bracing systems; asbestos removal and interior demolition work preparatory to the removal of asbestos; rehabilitation of the floors and roof structures, and replacement of roofing material; replacement of the exterior cladding for maximizing energy efficiency; installation of new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems; replacement of partitions, core finishes, plumbing, and sprinklers; and associated tenant improvements.<sup>14</sup>

## IMPACTS

This alternative would entail office development at a lesser intensity than that proposed with the project. The existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building contains about 184,000 square feet, and about 136,000 square feet of net office space, about 15 to 30 percent less space than that proposed in the new City Administrative Building (not counting parking proposed with the project), and even more of a difference in usable office space. Effects related to the intensity of development, therefore, such as transportation and air quality impacts, would be less intensive than with the project. However, all such impacts of the project would be less than significant. Unlike the project, and because it would include no on-site parking, this alternative would not contribute to a significant (mitigable) cumulative impact on traffic operations at the Van Ness Avenue / Golden Gate Avenue intersection. This alternative, however, would result in a greater on-site parking shortfall – up to about 330 spaces (depending on the level of visitor activity), compared to up to about 290 spaces with the proposed project (assuming valet operations), because, while parking demand would be less, this alternative would provide no on-site parking. As with the project, this shortfall would exceed the available off-street parking supply in the vicinity.

Effects related to the mass of the proposed City Administrative Building would not occur with this alternative, since the existing building would be reused. Thus, this alternative would cast no additional shadow on Civic Center Plaza, the Tenderloin Community School or the Federal Building plaza, nor would it result in the project's increase in the duration of wind hazard exceedances at the locations tested. This alternative also would not change views from Civic Center Plaza. It would arguably result in a beneficial impact, compared to existing conditions, because the existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building is in disrepair and this alternative would improve the building's exterior appearance.

Generation of noise and vibration during construction and rehabilitation would be less intensive than with the proposed project. Other construction-related effects, such as the potential discovery of subsurface cultural resources during excavation, would not occur with this alternative.

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<sup>14</sup> State of California, Department of General Services, Office of Project Development and Management, and San Francisco State Building Authority, *State of California San Francisco Civic Center Complex EIR, Final Addendum to the Draft EIR*. April 21, 1995, p. 9.

## C. ALTERNATIVE C: PROJECT WITH NO PARKING

### DESCRIPTION

This alternative would be similar to the project, except that no on-site parking would be provided. Instead of two levels of parking and loading below the grade of Golden Gate Avenue, this alternative would include 50,000 square feet of additional program space on the two subgrade levels (one of which would be at grade on Redwood Street, as with the proposed project), for a total of up to 325,000 square feet. Some of this additional space could be used for City offices, while other space, particularly in the basement level, might be used for telecommunications equipment, a City document production (photocopying and printing) shop, and other uses that do not normally require natural light.

### IMPACTS

The most substantive difference in impacts, compared to those with the proposed project, would be related to the fact that this alternative would not include parking on site. With no on-site parking, this alternative, like the Rehabilitation Alternative, would result in a greater on-site parking shortfall – up to about 430 spaces (perhaps slightly in excess of 450 spaces, depending on programming of the additional basement space), depending on the level of visitor activity, compared to up to about 290 spaces with the proposed project (assuming valet operations). As with the project, this shortfall would exceed the available off-street parking supply in the vicinity. Unlike the project, and because it would include no on-site parking, this alternative would not contribute considerably to a cumulative traffic impact at the intersection of Van Ness and Golden Gate Avenues.

Other impacts related to the intensity of development would be similar to those of the proposed project. With increased floor area, compared to the proposed project, trip generation would be incrementally greater than that of the project. However, at least some of the additional space would have low employee density, as it would not be used as office space, so the increase in traffic and transit demand, compared to the project, would likely be no more than about 10 percent, and would not result in any new significant impacts.

Effects related to the footprint and mass of the building, including effects on shadow and wind and construction-related impacts, would be the same as those of the proposed project (depending on the development option approved), because essentially the same structure would be built. Other less-than-significant effects described in the Initial Study, including the potential discovery of subsurface cultural resources during excavation, would occur similarly with this alternative as with the project.

## D. ALTERNATIVE D: HEIGHT AND BULK LIMIT COMPLIANCE

### DESCRIPTION

Under this alternative, a new City Administrative Building would be constructed on the project site but within the existing height and bulk limits of the site, which is within a 130-E Height and Bulk District. Therefore, unlike the proposed project, this alternative would not require rezoning.

The 130-E Height and Bulk District permits a maximum building height of 130 feet. Setbacks are required above 65 feet, however, so that the maximum permitted horizontal dimension of a building above that height is 110 feet, and the maximum permitted diagonal dimension is 140 feet. It should be noted that the existing vacant building at 525 Golden Gate Avenue is not in compliance with the bulk requirements of the "E" bulk controls.<sup>15</sup> For purposes of analysis, it is assumed that the City Administrative Building constructed under this alternative would be a five-story building covering the entire site, with an additional five-story tower at the southwestern portion of the project site. This alternative would contain about 155,000 square feet, and is assumed to include approximately 50 on-site parking spaces (about 70 spaces with valet operations). Assuming construction of a building of maximum feasible usable space, this alternative could provide approximately the same occupied floor area as is contained in the existing vacant building at 525 Golden Gate Avenue, which as noted has inefficient floor plans.

### IMPACTS

Effects related to the intensity of development would be similar to those of the Rehabilitation Alternative. That is, these impacts would be less intensive than with the project, as trip generation would be 30 to 40 percent less than with the project. Like the Rehabilitation Alternative, this alternative would result in less-than-significant traffic impacts. Because it would have less on-site parking than would the project, this alternative would not contribute considerably to a significant (mitigable) cumulative impact on traffic operations at the Van Ness Avenue / Golden Gate Avenue intersection. Other less-than-significant "operational" impacts of the project, such as those related to air quality, would also be less intensive under this alternative than with the project. This alternative would result in parking demand of between about 265 and 290 spaces, depending on the level of visitor activity, and an on-site shortfall of between about 195 and 220 spaces (assuming valet operations), compared to up to about 290 spaces with the project (assuming valet operations). As with the project, this shortfall would exceed the available off-street parking supply in the vicinity.

Effects related to the footprint and mass of the building would be different than those of the project, because the City Administrative Building constructed under this alternative would have a street wall of

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<sup>15</sup> The 525 Golden Gate Avenue building was constructed prior to the enactment of the current Planning Code bulk controls. Further, as a State of California office building, the existing building would not have been subject to local planning controls.

65 feet, half or less of the project's street wall height, depending on the development option approved, and about 30 feet less than the existing 525 Golden Gate Avenue building. Because of its five-story upper tower, this alternative would cast new shadow on the Tenderloin Community School compared to existing conditions, but the effect would be less than that of the proposed project. New shadow would occur only during late fall and early winter (approximately November through January), and would affect less of the school grounds, for a shorter duration each day, than would the project. This alternative would cast less shadow on the Federal Building plaza than would the project, because of the lower street wall height and the fact that the tower would be set back from the corner of Golden Gate and Polk.

Wind effects of this alternative would also be different. Because the Federal Building tends to control the wind environment in the vicinity, this alternative would not eliminate existing exceedances of the hazard criterion. However, with a lower street wall height than the proposed project and the existing building on the site, this alternative would result in some incremental decreases in wind speeds around the base of the new building. Generally, however, wind effects would be similar to those of project Option B (the shorter, 12-story project option). In views from Civic Center Plaza, this alternative would be largely obscured by the new Courthouse, as is the case with the existing building.

Other less-than-significant effects described in the Initial Study, including generation of noise and vibration during construction and potential discovery of subsurface cultural resources during excavation, among other impacts, would occur in a similar fashion with this alternative to those with the project.

The Height and Bulk Limit Compliance Alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative because it would result in incrementally less substantial operational impacts on traffic and air quality than would the project (although project impacts would not be significant) and would reduce the proposed project's less-than-significant impact of new shadow on the Tenderloin Community School. As noted in Chapters IV and V, the proposed project would not generate any significant unavoidable environmental effects since the project would include mitigation measures to avoid all potentially significant effects. In addition, the project would not make a considerable incremental contribution to cumulative impacts that could not be mitigated.

## E. ALTERNATIVE E: OFF-SITE ALTERNATIVE

### DESCRIPTION

An off-site alternative location has been identified within the Civic Center, on the opposite side of City Hall from the proposed project site. The off-site alternative would be constructed at the corner of Hayes and Polk Streets, across Lech Walesa (Ivy) Street from the Department of Public Health building. This alternative would be nine stories tall (about 120 feet) and would decrease to seven or eight stories (91 to 104 feet) along Lech Walesa (Ivy) Street to minimize the shadow cast on Civic Center Plaza. It would occupy the eastern portion of the half-block between Lech Walesa and Hayes Streets, essentially in mirror image, relative to City Hall, to the project site. Because it would be shorter than either of the

project options, this alternative would occupy a larger footprint, extending about 275 feet west of Polk Street, compared to about 180 feet for the proposed project. The alternative site's height and shadow constraints would limit the size of the building to approximately 267,000 square feet of gross floor area, similar to Option B of the proposed project. As with the project, on-site parking would be provided, with the number of spaces to be a function of the footprint. Assuming two levels of parking, this alternative could provide about 150 spaces (about 210 spaces with valet operations). As with the project, a parking variance would be required. This alternative would require that the City acquire and demolish the existing California State Automobile Association diagnostic clinic and parking garage building on Hayes Street. No rezoning or General Plan amendment for height would be required, as this site is within a 120-X Height and Bulk District (120-foot height limit, no bulk limit).

## IMPACTS

Effects related to the intensity of development would be similar to those of the project. Trip generation would be essentially the same as with Option B of the project, but the changed location would result in traffic effects being focused on different intersections. Less-than-significant "operational" impacts of the project, such as those related to air quality, would essentially be the same under this alternative to those with the project. This alternative would result in the same parking demand as that of the project, but less of an on-site shortfall – up to about 220 spaces, compared to up to about 295 spaces with the project, because of the greater on-site parking supply. As with the project, this shortfall would exceed the available off-street parking supply in the vicinity.

Effects related to the footprint and mass of the building would be different than those of the project, because of the different location. As with the project options, this alternative would cast shadow on Civic Center Plaza, but not in excess of the Absolute Cumulative Limit; shadow from this alternative would occur at the southern portion of the plaza, near the center of the block between Polk and Larkin Streets, and only in late fall and early winter. This alternative would not cast shadow on the Tenderloin Community School. Wind effects would be similar to those of the two project options, in that the alternative site, like the project site, is in a windy area, where ground-level winds are and will continue to be dominated by other, taller buildings, including Fox Plaza at Polk and Market Streets and the CSAA tower at Fell Street and Van Ness Avenue. The off-site alternative would result in some increases, and possibly some decreases, in ground-level winds, particular around the site itself, but would not eliminate existing exceedances of the wind hazard criterion.

Other less-than-significant effects described in the Initial Study, including generation of noise and vibration during construction and potential discovery of subsurface cultural resources during excavation, among other impacts, would occur in a similar fashion with this alternative to those with the project.

According to the project sponsor, the cost of this alternative would be substantially greater than that of the proposed project due to site acquisition costs.

TABLE 4

## COMPARISON OF KEY IMPACTS: PROPOSED PROJECT AND ALTERNATIVES

Issue or Impact Area <sup>16</sup>	Proposed Project: Option A	Proposed Project: Option B	Proposed Project: No Project	Alternative A: No Project	Alternative B: Renovation of Existing Building	Alternative C: Project with No Parking	Alternative D: Height and Bulk Limit Compliance	Alt. E: Off-Site Alternative
<b>Description</b>								
New Construction	Ycs	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Height	14 stories 181 feet	12 stories 156 feet	N/A	8 stories 105 feet	12 to 14 stories up to 181 feet	10 stories 130 feet	9 stories 120 feet	
Square Footage (excluding parking)	275,000	226,500	N/A	185,000	up to 310,500	155,000	up to 217,000	
On-Site Parking	100 spaces; 140 valet; variance required	100 spaces; 140 valet; variance required	None	None; variance required	None; variance required	50 spaces; 70 valet; variance required	150 spaces; 210 valet; variance required	
<b>Impacts</b>								
Property Acquisition	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Could require acquisition of property and displacement of existing uses.
Significant Transportation Effect – Van Ness & Golden Gate	Yes (Cumulative only; mitigable)	Ycs (Cumulative only; mitigable)	No	No	No	No	No	No
New Shadow on Civic Center Plaza	Ycs, but not in excess of Absolute Cumulative Limit	Yes, but not in excess of Absolute Cumulative Limit	Yes, but not in excess of Absolute Cumulative Limit	None	Yes, but not in excess of Absolute Cumulative Limit	None	Yes, but not in excess of Absolute Cumulative Limit	Less than Option B
New Shadow on Tenderloin School, compared to existing	Yes, October through February mornings	Yes, October through February mornings, but less than Option A	Yes, October through February mornings, but less than Option A	None	Same as Project	None	Yes; less than with either project option	
Changes in Wind, compared to existing	Slight increase in speeds; no new exceedances of hazard criterion	Slightly less increase than Option A	None	None	Same as Project	Similar to Option B	Similar to project options	

<sup>16</sup> Not All Impacts Addressed are Significant under CEQA

# CHAPTER VII

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San Francisco, CA 94124  
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San Francisco, CA 94124-2644

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275 Battery Street, Suite 940  
San Francisco, CA 94111  
Attn: Tim Turner

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146 Leavenworth Street  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
Attn: Rob Waters

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1390 Market Street, Suite 318  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
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San Francisco, CA 94111

765/003; 0766/001  
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Buildings and Property Management  
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San Francisco, CA 94102

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Henry Tsai-Eng et. al.  
152 Garden Terrace  
Mountain View, CA 94040-3815

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1525 Grant Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94133

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Attn: John Elberling

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Dennis Purcell Coblentz, Patch, Duffy & Bass 222 Kearny Street, 7th Floor San Francisco, Ca 94108	Shartsis Freise & Ginsburg One Maritime Plaza, 18th Floor San Francisco, CA 94111 Attn: Dave Kremer	Bethea Wilson & Associates Art In Architecture 2028 Scott, Suite 204 San Francisco, CA 94115
Ramsay/Bass Interest 3756 Grant Avenue, Suite 301 Oakland, CA 94610 Attn: Peter Bass	Solem & Associates 545 Mission Street San Francisco, CA 94105 Attn: Olive Lewis	<b>NEIGHBORING PROPERTY OWNERS AND OCCUPANTS</b>
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	Tenants & Owners Development Corp. 230 - Fourth Street San Francisco, CA 94103 Attn: John Elberling	

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Occupant  
536 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102

763/005  
Occupant  
544 Golden Gate Avenue, #1, 2, 3, 4  
San Francisco, CA 94102

763/016  
Occupant  
530 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102

763/016  
Occupant  
530A Golden Gate Avenue  
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766/002, 003  
San Francisco Real Estate Department  
25 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94102-6033

Occupant  
555 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102

# **CHAPTER VIII**

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## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A: Initial Study

APPENDIX B: Wind Analysis Results

# **APPENDIX A**

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## **INITIAL STUDY**

**NOTICE THAT AN  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT  
IS DETERMINED TO BE REQUIRED**

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**Date of this Notice:** September 18, 1999

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**Lead Agency:** City and County of San Francisco, Planning Department  
1660 Mission Street, 5th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103

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**Agency Contact Person:** Bill Wycko                    **Telephone:** (415) 558-6294

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**Project Title:** 97.478E: City Administrative Building                    **Project Sponsor:** San Francisco Department of Administrative Services  
**Contact Person:** Tony Irons, City Architect (415) 554-4531

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**Project Address:** 525 Golden Gate Avenue, at Polk Street  
**Assessor's Block and Lot:** Block 766, Lot 1  
**City and County:** San Francisco

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**Project Description:** At Polk Street and Golden Gate Avenue in the San Francisco Civic Center, the proposed project includes acquisition and demolition of an existing 184,000-square-foot office building, vacated by the State of California following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake due to structural damage, and construction of an approximately 234-foot tall office building containing about 325,000 square feet of floor area, and about 100 parking spaces. The new building would be occupied by City workers primarily now working in leased City office space elsewhere in the greater Civic Center area. Acquisition of the site would require approval of the Board of Supervisors. Demolition and new construction would require permits from the Department of Building Inspection.

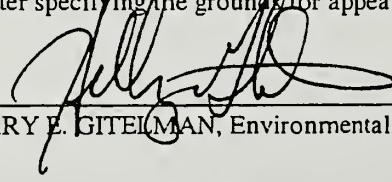
The proposed project would also require rezoning and a General Plan Amendment to permit increased height and bulk (approval by Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors) and a variance for fewer than Code-required parking and loading spaces (Zoning Administrator).

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**THIS PROJECT MAY HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT IS REQUIRED.** This determination is based upon the criteria of the Guidelines of the State Secretary for Resources, Sections 15063 (Initial Study), 15064 (Determining Significant Effect), and 15065 (Mandatory Findings of Significance), and the following reasons, as documented in the Initial Study for the project, which is attached.

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Deadline for Filing an Appeal to the Planning Commission of this Determination that an EIR is required is October 18, 1999. An appeal requires: 1) a letter specifying the grounds for appeal, and 2) a \$209.00 filing fee.



HILLARY E. GITELMAN, Environmental Review Officer

**CITY ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING (525 GOLDEN GATE AVENUE)  
INITIAL STUDY  
97.478E**

## **I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

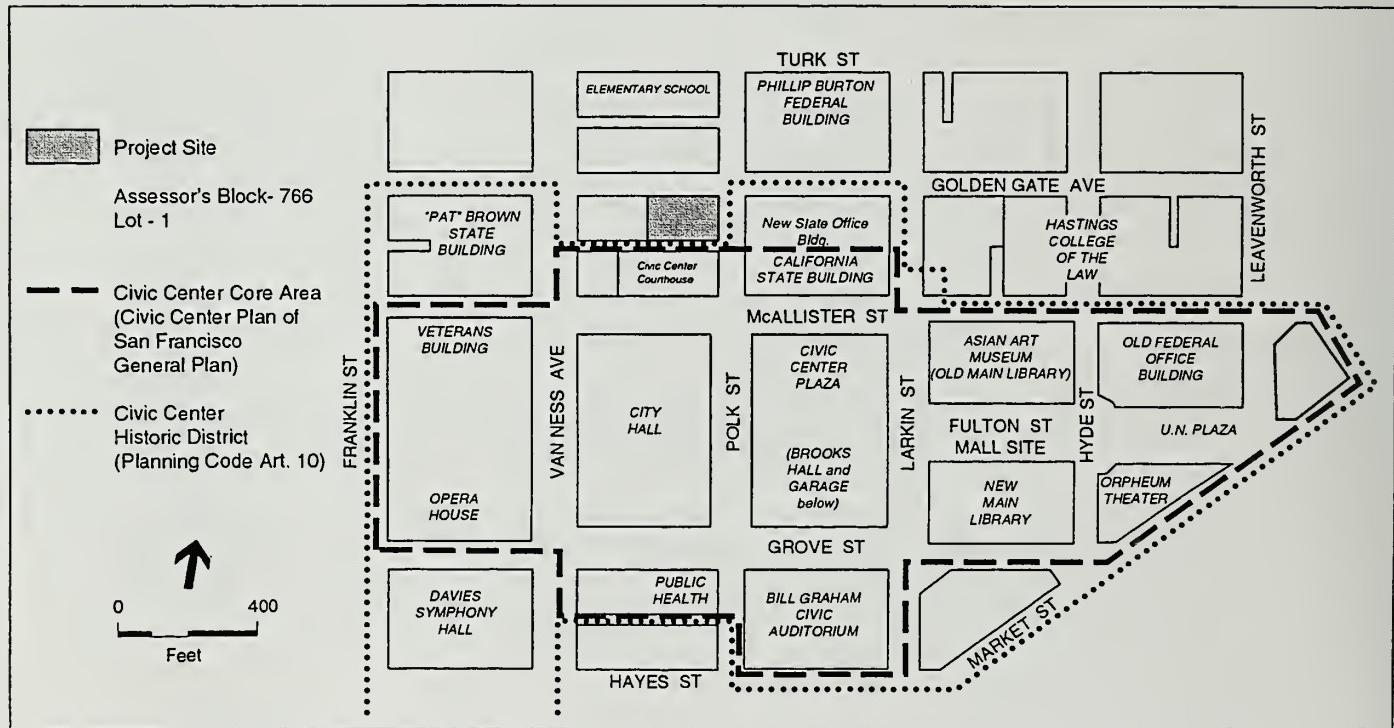
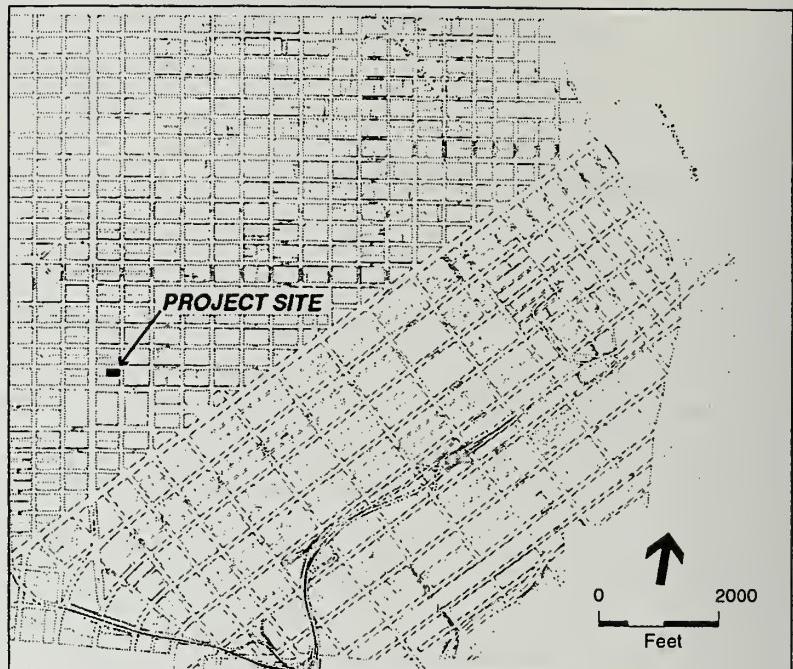
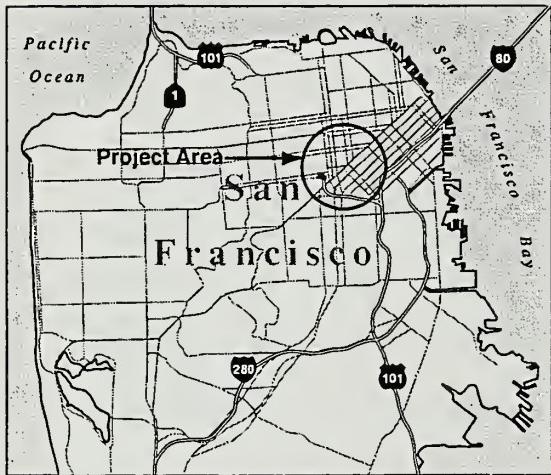
The project site is at 525 Golden Gate Avenue, at the corner of Golden Gate Avenue and Polk Street at the northwestern corner of the Civic Center (see Figure 1). The project would involve acquisition of the site by the City of San Francisco, demolition of an existing vacant office building on the site, and construction of a new 16-story, approximately 234-foot tall building for City offices. The new City Administrative Building is anticipated to include two basement parking levels, one of which would be approximately at grade on the rear (Redwood Street) side of the building and which would include a loading dock on Redwood and the entry to the parking garage. The project would provide approximately 325,000 square feet of floor area, exclusive of the mechanical penthouse, including about 275,000 sq. ft. of office space and about 50,000 sq. ft. devoted to parking, vehicular circulation, and loading dock. This would support approximately 1,000 City employees, most of whom are expected to be relocated from existing leased office space elsewhere in the greater Civic Center. The building would also accommodate the City law library.

The project would include rezoning of the site to accommodate the proposed 234-foot building. Approximately 100 parking spaces would be provided (about 140 spaces with valet operations), and the project will seek a Variance from the Planning Code requirement for on-site parking. The project would include one loading space to accommodate vans and small trucks at a loading dock on Redwood Street; a Variance will be sought from the Planning Code requirement for a second loading space (Sec. 152). The project would include at least 38 bicycle parking spaces in compliance with Planning Code Section 155.1, and would include at least four showers and eight clothes lockers in accordance with Planning Code Section 155.3.

The approximately 22,000-sq.-ft. site consists of Lot 1 in Assessor's Block 766, and is currently occupied by a seven-story State of California office building that has been vacant since shortly after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.<sup>1</sup> The site is within a P (Public) Use District and a 130-E (130-foot height limit, bulk limits above 65 feet) Height and Bulk District. There is no Floor Area Ratio (FAR) limit in a P District. The site is immediately adjacent to the two historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places and to the local Civic Center Historic District, listed in Article 10 of the City Planning Code; each of these three districts extends along the southern boundary of the project site on Redwood Street. It is adjacent on the west to the Van Ness Avenue Special Use District, and is one block west of the North of Market Residential Special Use District.

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<sup>1</sup> State of California, Department of General Services, *San Francisco/Oakland State Facilities Plan*, May 1992, p. A.14.



SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates

97.428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■

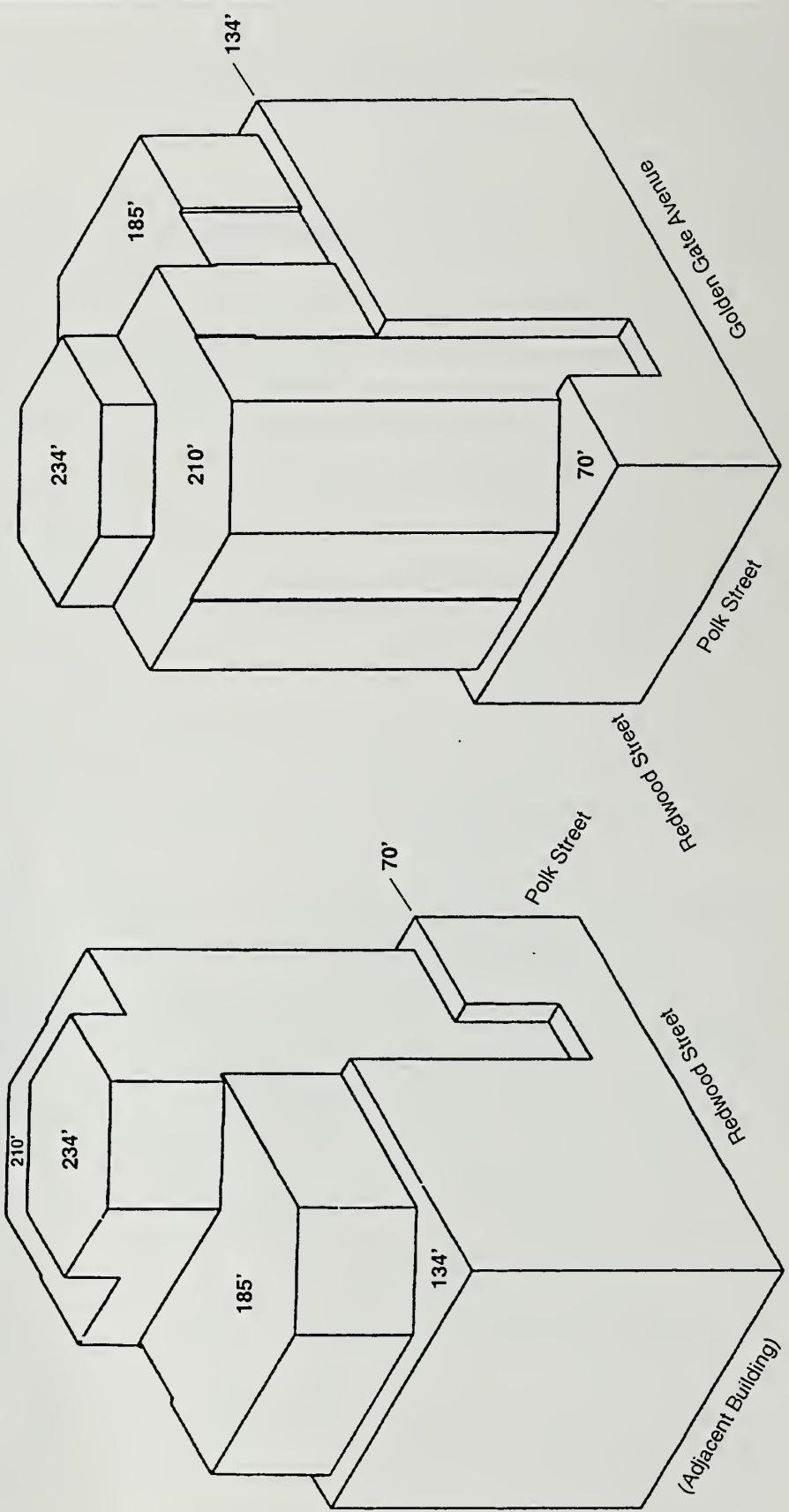
**Figure 1**  
Project Location

With the exception of the law library, the entire proposed building would be used for City employee office space, most likely departments currently located in leased space elsewhere in the greater Civic Center area.

The proposed City Administrative Building is anticipated to be constructed pursuant to a pilot program for the design and construction of new Resource-Efficient City Buildings approved by the Board of Supervisors in May 1999 and by the Mayor in June 1999. The pilot program calls for the creation of a multi-departmental task force that, along with the Bureau of Architecture within the Department of Public Works, will identify several Pilot Projects from among construction projects proposed by several City departments. The Pilot Projects will be selected to demonstrate innovative construction techniques, building materials, landscaping techniques, and/or other building systems addressing 11 separate goals: A) improved energy efficiency; B) consideration of energy generation by passive solar or other renewable source; C) improved water conservation; D) healthy indoor air quality; E) adequate storage and collection of recyclables; F) environmentally sensitive landscaping, including planting of drought-resistant native plants and design for landscape maintenance using integrated pest management; G) procurement of building materials with minimal impact on indoor air quality, maximized recycled product content, and future recycling potential; H) building design features that discourage pest infestation, such as sloping ledges to discourage the roosting of pigeons and easy-to-clean floor surfaces to discourage dust mites and other insects; I) stormwater management; J) water pollution prevention; and K) wastewater recycling. The Bureau of Architecture is to report to the Supervisors by 2002 on the environmental, health, and/or economic benefits of the Pilot Projects; standards for and methodology for evaluating the resource efficiency of future projects, and the success of the pilot program.

The proposed City Administrative Building would be a steel-frame structure clad in panels of masonry and/or stone and glass and intended to be compatible with other public buildings in the Civic Center. Based on preliminary design work, the new building is anticipated to be constructed as a series of stepped geometric forms and setbacks specifically designed to minimize the building's apparent mass and reduce ground-level wind and shadow effects. The current design calls for the primary northern facade, on Golden Gate Avenue, to have a street wall 134 feet tall along approximately the western two-thirds of the facade, stepping down to a 70-foot base on Polk Street. A tower would rise above a five-foot setback at the 134-foot level, to a height of up to about 210 feet. This setback would exist around the entire building, except at the corner of Polk and Golden Gate, where the northeast corner of the hexagonal tower would have a deeper diagonal setback, or chamfer, and at the opposite, southwest corner of the tower, where a comparable chamfer would occur. A mechanical penthouse would rise to 234 feet and be set back the same five feet from the southern facade, and deeply set back from the west, north and eastern facades. Figure 2 depicts axonometric drawings of the proposed building massing, showing the various setbacks. This massing model was used for wind and shadow studies. The treatment of the building facades, their shape, and treatment of materials may deviate from this model. Figures 3 and 4 depict axonometric views of a conceptual design for the proposed building, derived from the massing model. This scheme is not approved, but does illustrate one potential design approach.

97.428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■  
**Figure 2**  
Axonometric Views for Project



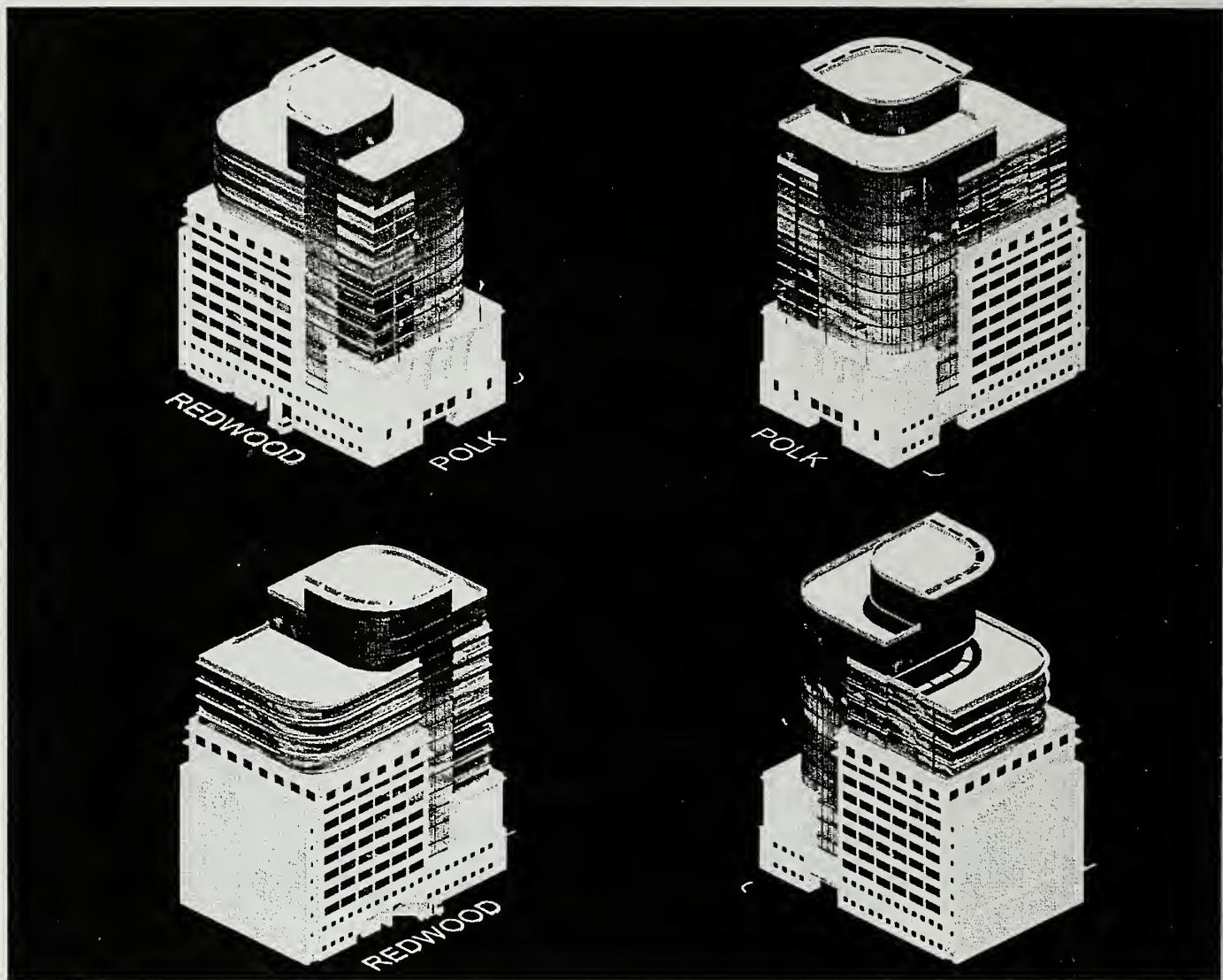
SOURCE:



SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates

97.428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■

**Figure 3**  
Schematic Model of Project  
Viewed from Southeast



SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates

97.428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■

**Figure 4**  
Schematic Models of Project

The main pedestrian entrance would be on Golden Gate Avenue, near the corner of Polk Street. The main lobby inside this entrance would lead to elevators approximately in the center of the building that would serve all upper floors. A secondary pedestrian entrance would be on Polk Street. As noted above, the building would have a parking entrance and freight loading dock on Redwood Street, along the southern facade. Trash and recycling receptacles would also be located in this area.

The project would include demolition of the existing 525 Golden Gate building, which sustained damage to its facade and interior in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Prior to demolition, the City or the state would undertake remediation of asbestos and other potentially hazardous materials in accordance with local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

The existing 525 Golden Gate building was constructed in 1959 and is not rated in any known architectural surveys; as noted above, the site is adjacent to nationally and locally designated historic districts. There is no parking in the existing building, which contains one off-street loading space. There are vacant planter boxes at street level on the front facade of the existing building, but no vegetation on the site. Existing street trees on the Golden Gate Avenue and Polk Street sidewalks in front of the project site would be replaced.

Excavation would be required to a depth of approximately 30 feet below the grade level on Golden Gate Avenue. The existing building basement, including the existing loading dock on Redwood Street, would be demolished. The project may include pile driving as part of its foundation system. A geotechnical report would be prepared for the project sponsor and its recommendations reviewed and accepted by the Department of Building Inspection prior to the start of excavation or construction.

Project construction is anticipated to begin with demolition and last for approximately 36 months, meaning occupancy would occur in mid-2003, assuming the project were to begin in mid-2000. No source of funding for construction has yet been identified.

The Board of Supervisors would be asked to approve acquisition of the project site from the state. The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors would be asked to approve a General Plan Amendment and rezoning of the site to change the Height and Bulk District of the entire site from 130-E to allow for construction of a 234-foot-tall building. Because the project would be a public building constructed on City-owned land, the Art Commission must approve the building design. The Planning Commission or Planning Department must consider a General Plan referral for conformity with the General Plan for acquisition of the site, demolition of existing building, and construction of the project. The project would require demolition and construction permits from the Department of Building Inspection and a variance from the Zoning Administrator for providing less than the Planning Code-required amount of parking and loading. No building permit applications have been filed to date.

## **II. SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

### **A. EFFECTS FOUND TO BE POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT**

The City Administrative Building project is examined in this Initial Study to identify potential effects on the environment. Project-specific impacts on visual quality, transportation, shadow, and wind have been determined to be potentially significant, and will be analyzed in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

### **B. EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT**

The following potential impacts were determined either to be insignificant or to be mitigated through measures included in the project. These items are discussed in Section III below, and require no further environmental analysis in the EIR: land use, population, noise, air quality, utilities/public services, biology, geology/topography, water, energy, hazards, and cultural resources.

## **III. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION CHECKLIST AND DISCUSSION**

		<u>Discussed</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>
<b>A. COMPATIBILITY WITH EXISTING ZONING AND PLANS</b>	1) Discuss any variances, special authorizations, or changes proposed to the Planning Code or Zoning Map, if applicable.	X	
	2) Discuss any conflicts with any adopted environmental plans and goals of the City or Region, if applicable.	X	X

The San Francisco Planning Code, which incorporates by reference the City Zoning Maps, governs permitted uses, densities and configuration of buildings within San Francisco. Permits to construct new buildings or to alter or demolish existing ones may not be issued unless the proposed project conforms to the Code or an exception is granted pursuant to provisions of the Code.

The project site is within a P (Public) Use District, which includes land that is owned by a governmental agency and is in some form of public use. Generally, uses allowed in a P district are public structures and uses of the City and County of San Francisco and accessory nonpublic uses, when in conformity with the General Plan and other applicable laws and regulations (Planning Code Section 234.1).

The project site is within a 130-E (130-foot height limit, bulk limits above 65 feet) Height and Bulk District and would require a rezoning to a height limit of 240 feet to permit construction of the 234-foot-tall project. The project would also require rezoning to an "T" bulk district (above 150 feet, maximum length of 170 feet and maximum diagonal dimension of 200 feet). Finally, the project would require a General Plan Amendment to revise the Height and Bulk maps in the Urban Design Element (Maps 4 and 5, pp. I.5.34 and I.5.35). The rezoning to a 240-I height and bulk district and the General Plan Amendment require approval by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. The proposed rezoning would create a height and bulk district with a greater height limit than elsewhere in the immediate project vicinity. The Philip Burton Federal Building, diagonally across the intersection of Polk and Golden Gate from the project site, is located in the 130-E Height and Bulk District, but is

approximately 295 feet tall. Similarly, the new State of California office building, across Polk Street from the project site, is within an 80-X Height and Bulk District but is about 185 feet tall. However, federal and state properties are not subject to City zoning laws. The nearest 240-foot height districts are at Franklin and Turk Streets, three blocks northwest of the project site (part of a district that extends north and west on Cathedral Hill) and at Eighth and Mission Streets, six blocks southeast of the site. There is a 320-foot height district at Fell, Tenth, and Market Streets, five blocks south of the site. The remainder of the project vicinity is generally governed by height limits of 70 to 130 feet. There is no Floor Area Ratio (FAR) limit in a P District.

Zoning in the vicinity is P to the south and east within the San Francisco Civic Center, NC-3 (Moderate-Scale Neighborhood Commercial) immediately north across Golden Gate Avenue, largely RC-4 (Residential-Commercial Combined, High Density) elsewhere to the north and NC-3 and RM-2 (Residential, Mixed, Moderate Density) to the west. Areas of C-3-G (Downtown General Commercial) exist about two blocks to the east.

The site is immediately adjacent to the two historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places and to the local Civic Center Historic District, listed in Article 10 of the City Planning Code; each of these three districts extends along the southern boundary of the project site on Redwood Street. It is adjacent on the west to the Van Ness Avenue Special Use District, and is one block west of the North of Market Residential Special Use District.

As a City office building, the project is not subject to approval under Planning Code Section 321 and 322, the Office Development Annual Limit, nor is the project subject to other Planning Code requirements for private office projects, including the Office Affordable Housing Production Program (Section 313 *et. seq.*; currently proposed for revision as the Jobs-Housing Linkage Program), the provision of child care fees (Section 314 *et. seq.*), or the payment of transit impact development fees under Article 38 of the Administrative Code.

Environmental plans and policies, like the '97 *Clean Air Plan*, directly address physical environmental issues and/or contain standards or targets that must be met in order to preserve or improve specific components of the City's physical environment. The proposed project would not obviously or substantially conflict with any such adopted environmental plan or policy.

The City and County of San Francisco *General Plan* provides general policies and objectives to guide land use decisions. The proposed project is within that part of San Francisco covered by the Civic Center Plan, an area plan contained within the *General Plan*. The Civic Center Plan calls for "maintain[ing] and reinforc[ing] the Civic Center as the symbolic and ceremonial focus of community government and culture" (Objective 1); "emphasiz[ing] key public buildings, particularly City Hall, through visually prominent siting" (Objective 1, Policy 1); "maintain[ing] the formal architectural character of the Civic Center;" (Objective 1, Policy 2); and "design[ing] Civic Center buildings and open spaces to serve as public gathering places for ceremonial, cultural, recreational, and other community activities" (Objective 1, Policy 3). The Civic Center Plan also states that the City should "develop the Civic Center

as a cohesive area for the administrative functions of city, state, and federal government, and as a focal point for cultural, ceremonial, and community activities" (Objective 2); "design the Civic Center to promote efficiency and convenience within and between the governmental entities represented, and provide for their orderly expansion" (Objective 2, Policy 1); "encourage governmental activities of each level of government to locate within a 'sphere of influence' within the Civic Center to avoid inefficient dispersal of these activities throughout the area" (Objective 2, Policy 3); and "encourage administrative-oriented governmental functions (executive, legislative, and judicial) to locate in new consolidated facilities rather than being dispersed throughout the adjacent area in leased or rented quarters" (Objective 2, Policy 4). In addition, the Plan calls for "locat[ing] buildings employing large number of employees and/or attracting large numbers of visitors in convenient pedestrian proximity to public transit and off-street parking facilities" (Objective 3, Policy 1); "locat[ing] parking beyond the western periphery of the Civic Center core, with direct vehicular access to major thoroughfares" (Objective 3, Policy 2)<sup>2</sup>; and "provid[ing] and pric[ing] parking for short-term visitor use, and discourag[ing] long-term parking. Encourage transit as the primary means of access to the Civic Center" (Objective 3, Policy 3). The project would generally be consistent with the above policies as it would locate a new City office building that would consolidate now-dispersed City offices in the immediate Civic Center area, while providing parking outside the Civic Center core, which is bounded by Redwood Street (see Figure 1, p. 3).

In general, potential conflicts, if any, with the *General Plan* are considered by the decisions-makers (normally the Planning Department and Planning Commission) independently of the environmental review process, as part of the decision to approve, modify or disapprove a proposed project. Any potential conflict not identified here could be considered in that context, and would not alter the physical environmental effects of the proposed project. The relationship of the proposed project to objectives and policies of the *General Plan* also will be discussed in the EIR.

On November 4, 1986, the voters of San Francisco passed Proposition M, the Accountable Planning Initiative, which established eight Priority Policies. These policies are: preservation and enhancement of neighborhood-serving retail uses; protection of neighborhood character; preservation and enhancement of affordable housing; discouragement of commuter automobiles; protection of industrial and service land uses from commercial office development and enhancement of resident employment and business ownership; earthquake preparedness; landmark and historic building preservation; and protection of open space. Prior to issuing a permit for any project which requires an Initial Study under the *California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA), or adopting any zoning ordinance or development agreement, the City is required to find that the proposed project or legislation is consistent with the Priority Policies. The Zoning Administrator in considering the variance application, and the Planning Commission, in considering the project design and the proposed rezoning, will determine whether the project is consistent with the Priority Policies.

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<sup>2</sup> As the project is outside the Civic Center "Core Area," the site is identified as a parking location in the Civic Center Plan map.

## B. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

1) <u>Land Use</u> – Could the project:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Discussed</u>
(a) Disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community?	—	X	X
(b) Have any substantial impact upon the existing character of the vicinity?	—	X	X

The project site was occupied by government offices until shortly after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Land uses south and east of the project site are primarily offices of city, state, and federal agencies. The new San Francisco Civic Center Courthouse is immediately south, across Redwood Street, and City Hall and the Department of Public Health are further south. The State of California Civic Center Complex, including a new office building on Golden Gate Avenue and the historic California State Building on McAllister Street, is to the east, across Polk Street. To the southeast are Civic Center Plaza, the Old Main Library building (the future home of the Asian Art Museum), New Main Library, and Bill Graham Civic Auditorium. Northeast, across the intersection of Polk and Golden Gate, is the Phillip Burton Federal Building. There are office uses to the north and commercial uses to the west. A new public elementary school is located on the block immediately north of the site, between Turk and Elm Streets at Van Ness Avenue. The nearest residences are condominiums at Opera Plaza, at Van Ness Avenue and Golden Gate, one block west, and apartments at Larkin and Golden Gate, Van Ness and McAllister, and Polk and Turk, all about one block from the site. The project, as a reintroduction of government office use on the site, would be compatible with existing nearby uses and would not disrupt or divide the Civic Center area. No significant land use impacts would occur, and land use will be included in the EIR for informational purposes only.

2) <u>Visual Quality</u> – Could the project:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Discussed</u>
(a) Have a substantial, demonstrable negative aesthetic effect?	—	To be Determined	—
(b) Substantially degrade or obstruct any scenic view or vista now observed from public areas?	—	To be Determined	—
(c) Generate obtrusive light or glare substantially impacting other properties?	—	X	X

The proposed project would demolish the existing building on the project site, which is approximately 100 feet tall on its eastern portion and up to about 125 feet tall where there is a mechanical penthouse at the western portion of the roof. Following demolition, a new building up to about 234 feet tall would be constructed on the site. The project's effects on views from Civic Center Plaza and other potential effects related to visual quality will be discussed in the EIR.

The project would not include mirrored glass, and therefore would comply with Planning Commission Resolution 9212, which prohibits the use of mirrored or reflective glass. There would be no significant impacts related to light and glare, and this topic will not be discussed in the EIR.

3) <u>Population</u> – Could the project:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Discussed</u>
(a) Induce substantial growth or concentration of population?	<u>  </u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>
(b) Displace a large number of people (involving either housing or employment)?	<u>  </u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>
(c) Create a substantial demand for additional housing in San Francisco, or substantially reduce the housing supply?	<u>  </u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>

The project would be occupied by about 1,000 office workers, most of whom are expected to be relocated from existing leased office space in the greater Civic Center area. Thus, the project would represent new employment at the site, since the existing structure on the site has been vacant since 1989, but not new employment in San Francisco. No employment would be displaced by the project, as there are no existing jobs at the project site. Assuming that the office space currently occupied by the relocated city workers would be backfilled, the project could indirectly foster employment growth in San Francisco. While it is not certain which City-leased office spaces would be vacated, it is assumed for this analysis that the vacated space could be reoccupied with approximately the same number of employees; that is, about 1,000 employees. Some of these would likely be new to San Francisco; some would relocate from other San Francisco office buildings. Overall employment in San Francisco is projected to grow from about 535,000 employees to about 673,500 employees in 2015, an increase of 26 percent.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the indirect project-related employment growth could constitute less than 1 percent of citywide employment growth by the year 2015. This potential increase in employment would be minimal in the context of the total employment in greater San Francisco. Further, whether the above-noted new jobs would be created is speculative because, while the project would make available the space to accommodate those workers, the project would not, in contrast to a private office building, be undertaken in response to market demand for office space.

San Francisco consistently ranks as one of the most expensive housing markets in the United States. San Francisco is the central city in an attractive region known for its agreeable climate, open space and recreational opportunities, cultural amenities, strong and diverse economy, and prominent educational institutions. As a regional employment center, San Francisco attracts people who want to live close to where they work, as well as those who work elsewhere but desire to live in the City. These factors continue to support strong housing demands in the City. New housing to relieve the market pressure

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<sup>3</sup> Keyser Marston Associates, Inc., *San Francisco Cumulative Growth Scenario: Final Technical Memorandum*, prepared for the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, March 30, 1998..

eat by the strong demand is particularly difficult to provide in San Francisco because the amount of land available is limited, and because land and development costs are high.

n estimated 311,300 households resided in San Francisco in 1995. By 2015, San Francisco households are expected to increase by 32,300, a 10 percent increase.<sup>4</sup> Based on a nexus study prepared for the proposed update of the Office Affordable Housing Production Program, if the 1,000 new jobs described above were to be created, they would create a demand for 337 new dwelling units.<sup>5</sup> Housing demand in itself is not a physical environmental effect, but an imbalance between local employment and housing can lead to long commutes with traffic and air quality impacts. Traffic issues will be analyzed in the EIR; see Section III.B.6, p. 19 below, regarding air quality.

In light of the above, the project would not result in significant effects related to population and housing, and these issues require no further analysis in the EIR. However, issues relating to growth inducement will be analyzed in the EIR.

<u>Transportation / Circulation</u> – Could the project:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Discussed</u>
(a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system?		To be Determined	
(b) Interfere with existing transportation systems, causing substantial alterations to circulation patterns or major traffic hazards?		To be Determined	
(c) Cause a substantial increase in transit demand which cannot be accommodated by existing or proposed transit capacity?		To be Determined	
(d) Cause a substantial increase in parking demand which cannot be accommodated by existing parking facilities?		To be Determined	

Increased employment on the project site would generate increased demand on the local transportation system, including increased traffic and increased transit demand. Project effects on transportation and circulation, including intersection operations, transit demand, and impacts on pedestrian circulation, parking, and freight loading, as well as construction impacts, will be analyzed in the EIR.

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Kaiser Marston Associates, Inc., cited in Note 3.

The method uses the estimated increase in employment (1,000 employees) by the fraction of San Francisco employees who live in the City (55%). This result, the approximate number of project-related employees who would live in the City (550), is divided by the average number of San Francisco workers in households where San Francisco workers reside (1.63). The estimated housing demand would be 736 units ( $1,000 \times 0.55 \div 1.63 = 33$ ).

5) <u>Noise</u> – Could the project:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Discussed</u>
(a) Increase substantially the ambient noise levels for adjoining areas?	—	X	X
(b) Violate Title 24 Noise Insulation Standards, if applicable?	—	X	X
(c) Be substantially impacted by existing noise levels?	—	X	—

The existing ambient noise environment in the vicinity of the proposed City Administrative Building is typical of downtown San Francisco, dominated by vehicular traffic including cars, trucks, MUNI buses and emergency vehicles. Noise measurements were taken at the project site over a two-day period in September 1998. From a location on Polk Street at Golden Gate Avenue, 24-hour noise levels were 77 dBA, Ldn.<sup>6</sup> During the night (10:00 p.m.. to 7:00 a.m.), the hourly noise level ranged from about 65 dBA to about 75 dBA. During the day (7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.), the hourly noise level ranged from about 69 dBA to 80 dBA;<sup>7</sup> daytime noise levels may have been influenced by adjacent construction. Another 24-hour noise measurement, taken in 1991 (before the start of several Civic Center Construction projects) on Larkin Street between Fulton and Grove Streets, indicated 71 Ldn.<sup>8</sup> During the night (10:00 p.m.. to 7:00 a.m.), the hourly noise level ranged from about 57 dBA to about 68 dBA. During the day (7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.), the hourly noise level ranged from about 58 dBA to 69 dBA.

The nearest sensitive noise receptors to the project site are residential units in an apartment building at 512 Van Ness Avenue, between McAllister and Redwood Streets, about one-half block from the site (within about 100 feet, measured at the closest points). The new Tenderloin Elementary School is on Turk Street at Van Ness Avenue, about one-half block north of the site (within about 220 feet). There are also residential units on the west side of Van Ness Avenue at Golden Gate Avenue (Opera Plaza), one block west of the site; at Turk and Polk Streets, one block north of the site; and at Golden Gate Avenue and Larkin Street, one block east of the site. Civic Center Plaza is one-half block south of the site, within about 230 feet. Other land uses in the vicinity include offices and ground-floor retail activities.

## Operational Noise

The Environmental Protection Element of the *General Plan* contains guidelines for determining the compatibility of various land uses with different noise environments.<sup>9</sup> In areas where noise levels are between 65 and 75 dBA (Ldn), the guidelines recommend that new office construction or development

<sup>6</sup> dBA is a measure of sound in units of decibels (dB). The "A" denotes the A-weighted scale, which simulates the response of the human ear to various frequencies of sound. Ldn, the day-night average noise level, is a noise measurement based on human reaction to cumulative noise exposure over a 24-hour period, taking into account the greater annoyance of nighttime noises; noise between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. is weighted 10 dBA higher than daytime noise.

<sup>7</sup> Environmental Science Associates, noise measurement taken September 14 through 17, 1998.

<sup>8</sup> *San Francisco Main Library EIR*, 90.808E, Final EIR certified February 27, 1992; p. 165.

<sup>9</sup> *San Francisco General Plan*, Environmental Protection Element, p. I.6.17.

should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features are included in the project design. The project would be constructed in an area where background noise levels were found to be about 70 dBA. The project sponsor would ensure that the final design includes noise insulation measures to reduce interior noise levels.

In addition, the project would be required to comply with San Francisco Police Code Section 2909, "Fixed Source Noise Levels," which regulates mechanical equipment noise. The project site and surrounding areas to the east and south are within a P District, for which there are no specific limits included in Section 2909; therefore, the project would be required to comply with the noise limits of the nearest district in which limits are set forth in the law. The more stringent limits applicable to the two adjacent zones would be the RC-4 district, located immediately adjacent to the western project boundary. The Ordinance limits equipment noise levels at the property line of an affected structure to 55 dBA between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. and 60 dBA between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. The proposed building would be required to comply with these noise limits. Since equipment noise would be limited to 55 dBA to meet the Ordinance's nighttime limit, the project's operational noise would not exceed the ambient noise levels in the project area and therefore, would not be perceptible.

The proposed project would not include housing; therefore, state Title 24 Noise Standards would not be applicable.

Project-related traffic increases would incrementally increase noise levels along local streets. Based on traffic estimates for this project,<sup>10</sup> future (2015) traffic increases along streets in the project vicinity would increase existing traffic noise levels along these streets by less than 2 dBA (with and without the proposed project). Noise increases attributable to the proposed project would be less than 1 dBA. To produce a noticeable noise increase, existing traffic volumes generally would need to double (a 100 percent increase). Cumulative and project-related traffic levels would increase by 25 percent or less on nearby streets including Golden Gate Avenue, McAllister Street, and Larkin Street. The largest cumulative traffic increase would be on Golden Gate Avenue, where cumulative traffic levels (2015) would increase by 41 percent over existing levels (with and without the project). Since the proposed office building would not significantly increase noise levels due to project-related traffic increases and mechanical equipment operation, no further study is required and operational noise will not be addressed in the EIR.

## **Construction Noise**

Construction noise is regulated by the San Francisco Noise Ordinance (Article 29 of the San Francisco Police Code). The ordinance requires that noise levels of construction equipment, other than impact tools, not exceed 80 decibels at a distance of 100 feet from the source. Impact tools (jackhammers, pile drivers, impact wrenches) must have both intake and exhaust muffled to the satisfaction of the Director

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<sup>10</sup> Environmental Science Associates, *City Administrative Office Building, Final Transportation Report* (97.478), June 9, 1998.

of Public Works. Section 2908 of the Ordinance prohibits construction between 8:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. if noise would exceed the ambient level by five decibels at the property line, unless a special permit is authorized by the Director of Public Works.

Noise levels greater than 60 dBA can interfere with normal speech and concentration. Noise levels greater than 70 dBA would require office workers to close windows or shout to communicate. General stress reaction has been observed in humans exposed to brief sounds of 75 dBA.<sup>11</sup> At noise levels of 85 dBA, normal conversation is extremely difficult, and sleep or rest virtually impossible. High noise levels also can lead to physiological effects, such as elevated blood pressure.<sup>12</sup>

Demolition, excavation, and building construction would result in a noticeable, if temporary, increase in the noise levels around the project site. The construction period, including demolition and site preparation, would last approximately 36 months. Typical noise levels associated with different construction phases range from 75 to 90 dBA, measured at a distance of 50 feet from the source.<sup>13</sup> The rate of attenuation is about six dBA for every doubling of distance from a point source. Interior noise levels are about 10 to 15 dBA less with windows open, and about 20 dBA less with windows closed. Therefore, average exterior noise levels at the rear of the 512 Van Ness Avenue apartment building, 100 feet away at the closest point, would be up to about 84 dBA, absent implementation of noise reduction techniques discussed below; interior noise levels, with windows closed, would be about 20 decibels lower, or up to about 64 dBA, and would be bothersome to day sleepers and interfere with speech.

Noise from construction equipment also could result in temporary disturbance (e.g., speech interference) to persons in adjacent office and retail buildings if the noise level in the interior of the building were to exceed 45 to 60 dBA.<sup>14</sup> Assuming a 20-dBA reduction with the windows closed, an exterior noise level of 65 to 80 dBA at receptors would maintain an acceptable interior noise environment for normal conversation. Exterior noise levels at the nearest commercial uses, a restaurant adjacent to the site on the west and retail and office uses across Golden Gate Avenue and Polk Street (each about 70 feet wide) could exceed 80 dBA absent implementation of noise reduction techniques discussed below.

Construction noise would be reduced by required muffling and shielding of equipment. Stationary noise sources could be fully enclosed, with openings baffled and located so that they face away from residential uses. Noise could be further reduced by barriers erected around the site and around stationary

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<sup>11</sup> The Central Institute for the Deaf, Effects of Noise on People, U.S. EPA, 1971.

<sup>12</sup> Cohen, Sheldon et al., "Cardiovascular and Behavioral Effects of Community Noise," American Scientist, Volume 69, October 1981.

<sup>13</sup> Bolt, Beranek and Newman, December 31, 1971, *Noise from Construction Equipment and Home Appliances*, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

<sup>14</sup> In indoor noise environments, the highest noise level that permits relaxed conversation with 100% intelligibility throughout the room is 45 dBA. Speech interference is considered to become intolerable when normal conversation is precluded at 3 ft., which occurs when background noise levels exceed 60 dBA. In outdoor environments, the highest noise level that permits normal conversation at 3 ft. with 95% sentence intelligibility is 66 dBA (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1974. *Information on Levels of Environmental Noise Requisite to Protect Public Health and Welfare with an Adequate Margin of Safety*).

equipment such as compressors, which would reduce construction noise by as much as 5 dBA, and by locating stationary equipment in pit areas or excavated areas, as those areas would serve as noise barriers. Barriers erected around the site, which would reflect or absorb noise, could further reduce noise impacts at pedestrian level (and in Civic Center Plaza), but would not be effective in reducing noise reaching the upper levels of nearby buildings because they could not be built high enough to block the path of sound. The project sponsor would require that the contractor locate stationary, noise-generating construction equipment as far as possible from the 512 Van Ness Avenue apartment building. Implementation of these noise-reduction measures into the construction program would reduce noise levels from individual construction equipment to less than 80 dBA at 100 feet, as required by the San Francisco Noise Ordinance.

It should be noted that existing buildings would, to some extent, shield sensitive land uses from construction noise. The San Francisco Civic Center Courthouse would shield most units in 512 Van Ness Avenue from construction noise, and would block much of the construction noise from directly reaching Civic Center Plaza. At the new elementary school, existing buildings on Golden Gate Avenue would block ground-level noise. This, in combination with noise reduction measures and the distance from the project site (more than 200 feet), would result in noise levels from individual construction equipment of 75 dBA or less (about 5 dBA greater than existing levels), and interior noise levels would be lower.

The project is not anticipated to include pile driving as part of its foundation system. If used, however, pile driving would be noisier than the conditions described above: conventional unmuffled and unshielded pile drivers emit typical peak noise levels of about 95 dBA at a distance of 100 feet each time the driver strikes the pile, although the noise is intermittent. Vibration from the impact during pile driving would be felt in adjacent and nearby buildings. These vibrations have been found to be more disturbing to some people than high noise levels. The Department of Public Works permits pile driving operation under certain conditions, which may include specifying relatively quiet equipment, pre-drilling pile holes, and limiting hours of operation to reduce the number of people exposed to noise effects. The project sponsor has indicated that, if pile driving were undertaken, pile holes would be pre-drilled to the extent feasible, which would be expected to reduce vibration and noise effects. While it is unclear whether these potential effects would be significant if unmitigated, pre-drilling of piles is identified as a mitigation measure included in the project (see Mitigation Measure, p. 32), which would ensure that the impact would be less than significant with mitigation.

In summary, during much of the construction period, noise levels would be above existing levels in the project area. There would be times when noise could be disruptive or annoying to nearby residents and occupants of nearby office and commercial uses. Construction noise could overlap with construction noise from the Asian Art Museum, across Civic Center Plaza (although most of that construction would be confined within the walls of the Old Main Library building), and would follow other construction projects in the area, such as the recently completed State Office Building and City Hall retrofit. However, noise impacts would be temporary in nature and limited to the approximately 36-month period of construction, and the project would be required to comply with the San Francisco Noise Ordinance.

Therefore, they are not considered significant environmental impacts and will not be discussed further in the EIR.

6) <u>Air Quality/Climate</u> – Could the project:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Discussed</u>
(a) Violate any ambient air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	X	X	
(b) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?		X	X
(c) Permeate its vicinity with objectionable odors?		X	
(d) Alter wind, moisture or temperature (including sun shading effects) so as to substantially affect public areas, or change the climate either in the community or region?			To be Determined

Two types of air quality impacts could be expected from the proposed project: long-term impacts related to use and operation of the project, and short-term impacts from construction activity.

### Emissions From Operations

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) CEQA Guidelines identifies thresholds of significance for determining whether the project's total operational emissions could result in a significant air quality impact. The BAAQMD's threshold for government office uses is an office building that exceeds approximately 175,000 square feet in size.<sup>15</sup> Since the proposed building would exceed this size, the project would have the potential to result in air quality impacts, and a quantified analysis was conducted.

Based on standard trip generation assumptions, mobile source emissions associated with the proposed project were calculated by combining trip generation rates with trip lengths (derived from the project transportation study) and current California vehicular emissions factors (EMFAC7F1.1). The results are presented in Table 1. As indicated in Table 1, project-related regional emissions would not exceed BAAQMD significance thresholds, and therefore project impacts would not be significant. Although the Bay Area is not in attainment with the federal ozone standard or the state standards for ozone and PM<sub>10</sub> (fine particulate matter), the project's incremental contribution to this effect would be considered *de minimis*; that is, the project would not meaningfully affect the region's compliance with federal or state air quality standards, and the project effects on regional air quality, therefore, would not be cumulatively considerable.

<sup>15</sup> Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), *BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines, Assessing the Air Quality Impacts of Projects and Plans*, 1996.

With regard to localized carbon monoxide (CO) concentrations, of the five signalized intersections analyzed in the project's transportation analysis, none would sustain an increase in p.m. peak-hour traffic volume of more than 84 vehicles (1.5 percent increase over existing volumes). CO emissions were calculated for the intersections of Van Ness Avenue and Hayes Street and Van Ness Avenue and Golden Gate Avenue, both of which would operate at Level of Service (LOS) D, the minimum acceptable LOS,

**TABLE 1**  
**ESTIMATED MOBILE SOURCE EMISSIONS TO REGIONAL AIR BASIN**

Source (Year)	Reactive Organic Gases (ROG)	Nitrogen Oxides (NOx)	Sulfur Oxides (SOx)	Inhalable Particulates (PM10)
Proposed Project (Year 2003) <sup>a</sup>	27.1	36.2	1.2	31.7
BAAQMD Significance Thresholds	80	80	n/a	80

<sup>a</sup> Project emissions are based on BAAQMD methodology shown in its *Guidelines* document (revised April 1996), an average vehicle trip generation rate of 1,795 vehicle trips per day, an average trip length of 9.7 miles, and an average vehicle speed of 20 miles per hour. Interpolated Year 2003 emissions factors were used. PM10 emissions include entrained road dust (0.69 gram/mile) in addition to tire wear and exhaust emissions.

SOURCE: Orion Environmental Associates (1998); Environmental Science Associates (1999)

with the project. As shown in Table 2, although there may be existing violations of the state CO standard, emissions levels are anticipated to decline by project buildup in 2003, and the project would not result in violations of the state or federal CO standards at either intersection.

In view of the above, operational air quality effects would not be significant, and no further analysis of operational air quality is required, and this subject will not be discussed in the EIR.

### Construction Emissions

Construction activities would temporarily affect local air quality. Demolition, grading, and construction activities would result in temporary increases in inhalable particulates (PM10) and equipment exhaust emissions. The BAAQMD does not require quantification of construction emissions (BAAQMD, 1996), but considers any project's construction-related impacts to be less-than-significant if required dust-control measures are implemented. The project includes a mitigation measure to reduce dust from both earthmoving and demolition activities (see p. 32). With implementation of this measure, construction-related air quality effects would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

## **Shadow**

The project would add new shadow to Civic Center Plaza in the late afternoon in late spring and early summer. The project also would newly shade portions of the Tenderloin Elementary School, located on the block to the north of the project site. Shadow effects will be discussed in the EIR.

**TABLE 2**  
**ESTIMATED CARBON MONOXIDE CONCENTRATIONS AT SELECTED  
 INTERSECTIONS IN PROJECT VICINITY**

Intersection	Averaging Time (hours)	Concentrations (parts per million) <sup>a,b</sup>	Existing (1999)	Future Base (2003)	Future Base + Proj. (2003)
Van Ness Avenue / Hayes Street	1	17.3	13.6	13.7	
	8	11.4	8.9	9.0	
Van Ness Avenue / McAllister Street	1	15.7	12.5	12.5	
	8	10.2	8.1	8.1	

<sup>a</sup> Carbon monoxide concentrations estimates were prepared using BAAQMD methodology and composite emissions factors (Bay Area Air Quality Management District, 1996) and p.m. peak-hour traffic estimates developed for this report. Concentrations correspond to locations at the edge of the road.

<sup>b</sup> One-hour average concentrations include a background concentration of 6.8 ppm in 1999 and 5.8 ppm in 2003. Eight-hour average concentrations are assumed to be 70 percent of the local contribution to the one hour concentrations, plus a background concentration of 4.0 ppm in 1999 and 3.5 ppm in 2003. Background concentrations are based on three-year average of second highest annual values at BAAQMD monitoring station at 939 Ellis Street in San Francisco and BAAQMD-recommended rollback factors (Bay Area Air Quality Management District, 1996).

Note: The state one-hour carbon monoxide standard is 20 ppm and the corresponding national standard is 35 ppm. The state and national eight-hour carbon monoxide standard is 9.0 ppm.

SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates, 1999.

## **Wind**

Wind impacts are generally caused by large building masses extending substantially above their surroundings, and by buildings oriented such that a large wall catches a prevailing wind, particularly if such a wall includes little or no articulation. The project would result in the replacement of a 125-foot tall building with a 234-foot tall building. The proposed project could increase ground-level winds in the vicinity of the project site. Potential wind effects require further analysis and will be included in the EIR.

7) <u>Utilities/Public Services</u> – Could the project:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Discussed</u>
(a) Breach published national, state or local standards relating to solid waste or litter control?	—	X	—
(b) Extend a sewer trunk line with capacity to serve new development?	—	X	—
(c) Substantially increase demand for schools, recreation or other public facilities?	—	X	—
(d) Require major expansion of power, water, or communications facilities?	—	X	X

The proposed project would incrementally increase demand for and use of public services and utilities on the site and increase water consumption, but not in excess of amounts expected and provided for in the project area, and would not be expected to have any measurable impact on public services or utilities. Therefore, effects would not be significant, and this topic requires no further analysis and will not be included in the EIR.

8) <u>Biology</u> – Could the project:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Discussed</u>
(a) Substantially affect a rare or endangered species of animal or plant or the habitat of the species?	—	X	X
(b) Substantially diminish habitat for fish, wildlife or plants, or interfere substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species?	—	X	X
(c) Require removal of substantial numbers of mature, scenic trees?	—	X	X

The project site is covered entirely by impervious surfaces. No trees or other vegetation exist on the site. The project would not affect any threatened, rare or endangered plant life or habitat. The project would not interfere with any resident or migratory species. Effects related to biology would not be significant and this topic will not be discussed in the EIR.

9) <u>Geology/Topography</u> – Could the project:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Discussed</u>
(a) Expose people or structures to major geologic hazards (slides, subsidence, erosion and liquefaction)?	—	X	X
(b) Change substantially the topography or any unique geologic or physical features of the site?	—	X	X

The project site is relatively level, with an elevation of about 60 feet, San Francisco City Datum (SFD).<sup>16</sup> There have been no recent geotechnical investigations conducted for the site. However, based on investigations conducted at the adjacent San Francisco Civic Center Courthouse site, it is expected that the geologic materials beneath the site consist of fill underlain by dense to very dense Dune Sand; a thin organic layer of clay (formerly top soil); then clayey sand, sandy clay, and sand of the Colma Formation. Bedrock is estimated to be at a depth of about 180 feet below the surface (Treadwell & Rollo, 1993).

The project site is located within a seismically active region. The San Francisco *General Plan* Community Safety Element contains maps that show areas in the city subject to geologic hazards. The project site is in an area subject to groundshaking from earthquakes along the San Andreas and Northern Hayward Faults and other faults in the San Francisco Bay Area (Maps 2 and 3). The project site is not in an area of liquefaction potential (Map 4), a Seismic Hazards Study Zone (SHSZ) designated by the California Division of Mines and Geology. The low liquefaction potential is confirmed by the presence of dense saturated sands encountered beneath the adjacent San Francisco Civic Center Courthouse site.

The primary concerns related to seismic activity include surface fault rupture, ground shaking, and secondary effects. The project site is not in an Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone, and no known active fault exists on or in the immediate vicinity of the site. Like the entire San Francisco Bay Area, the project site is subject to groundshaking in the event of an earthquake on these faults, although surface rupture is unlikely. Other hazards related to earthquakes that were considered include subsidence, tsunami inundation, land sliding, liquefaction, and inundation from reservoir failure; these hazards are considered to be absent at the proposed project site.

As mandated by building code requirements, prior to design and construction of the proposed building, a detailed geotechnical investigation would be conducted to evaluate site-specific geologic conditions for the project. A detailed geotechnical report would then be prepared specifying the recommended foundation design, requirements for retaining walls, shoring and underpinning, and dewatering methods. The report would be prepared by a California-licensed geotechnical engineer. The geotechnical report and final building plan for the project would be reviewed by the Department of Building Inspection (DBI) to ensure that all geotechnical hazards have been appropriately addressed. The project sponsor and contractor would follow the recommendations of the final geotechnical report(s) regarding any excavation and construction for the project. The project sponsor would ensure that the construction contractor conducts a pre-construction survey of existing conditions and monitors the adjacent building for damage during construction, if recommended by the geotechnical engineer.

The project would be constructed to meet the current seismic engineering standards of the San Francisco Building Code, which is designed to allow for some structural damage to buildings, but not collapse, during a major earthquake. The geotechnical report prepared for the project would evaluate seismic safety requirements and specify design criteria to meet the seismic safety standards of the building code.

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<sup>16</sup> San Francisco City Datum (SFD) establishes the City's zero point for surveying purposes at approximately 8.6 feet above mean sea level.

The DBI would review the geotechnical report and final building plans to ensure compliance with all San Francisco Building Code provisions regarding structural safety. When DBI reviews these items, it will determine necessary engineering and design features for the project to reduce potential damage to structures from groundshaking. Therefore, potential damage to structures from geologic and seismic hazards on a project site would be ameliorated through the DBI requirement for a geotechnical report and review of the building permit application.

The project would replace the existing building constructed prior to the enactment of these seismic standards. The proposed building would be subject to more stringent building standards and therefore more resistant to earthquake damage than the existing building on the project site. Persons using the site after project construction would be relatively safer than those using the site in its present condition in the event of a major earthquake. The project would not result in a substantial change in population, therefore would not expose a substantially larger number of persons than at present to earthquake hazards in the project area.

The project could require dewatering (see Section III.10, Water, below). As mandated by building code requirements, should dewatering be necessary, the final soils report would address the potential settlement and subsidence impacts of this dewatering. Based upon this discussion, the soils report would contain a determination as to whether or not a lateral movement and settlement survey should be done to monitor any movement or settlement of surrounding buildings and adjacent streets. If a monitoring survey is recommended, the Department of Building Inspection would require that a Special Inspector (as defined in Article 3 of the Building Code) be retained by the project sponsor to perform this monitoring. Instruments would be used to monitor potential settlement and subsidence. If, in the judgment of the Special Inspector, unacceptable movement were to occur during construction, groundwater recharge would be used to halt this settlement. The project sponsor would delay construction if necessary. Costs for the survey and any necessary repairs to service lines under the street would be borne by the project sponsor.

As mandated by building code requirements, should dewatering be necessary, the project sponsor and contractor would follow the geotechnical engineer's recommendations regarding dewatering to avoid settlement of adjacent streets, utilities and buildings that could potentially occur as a result of dewatering. The sponsor and contractor would also follow the geotechnical engineer's recommendations regarding installation of settlement markers around the perimeter of shoring to monitor any ground movements outside of the shoring itself. Shoring systems would be modified as necessary in the event that substantial movements were detected.

The project would not alter the topography of the site. In light of the above requirements under the applicable codes, the project would not result in a significant effect related to geology, and no further analysis of geology and seismicity is required in the EIR.

10) <b>Water</b> – Could the project:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Discussed</u>
(a) Substantially degrade water quality, or contaminate a public water supply?	—	X	—
(b) Substantially degrade or deplete groundwater resources, or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge?	—	X	X
(c) Cause substantial flooding, erosion or siltation?	—	X	—

The project site is currently completely covered by impervious surfaces, consisting of a vacant office building. The proposed project would also cover the entire site with the proposed new structure. Therefore, the area of impervious surfaces would be unchanged from the present time, there would be no increase in volume of surface runoff from the site. The general drainage pattern of the site would not be altered; site runoff would continue to drain into the City's combined sanitary and storm sewer system. Runoff from the site contains common urban water pollutants, which on sites entirely covered by structures are primarily associated with atmospheric deposition. Thus, no impacts to the volume or quality of the runoff would be anticipated due to the proposed project.

Based on groundwater measurements made for the geotechnical report for the adjacent San Francisco Civic Center Courthouse, groundwater at the site currently would be expected to occur at about 17 feet below the surface. Excavation required for the project is expected to extend to a depth of about 30 feet below grade; and construction of two basement levels would also likely extend below the water table. Thus, dewatering would be required for excavation as well as long-term drainage/dewatering systems for the basement levels.

The project includes measures required by City code and state laws that would reduce potential effects of dewatering. If the groundwater contains chemical concentrations or sediments levels in excess of the required discharge criteria, pre-treatment or settling would be required prior to discharge to the sewer system. If chemical standards cannot be met with on-site treatment, off-site disposal by a certified waste hauler would be required. In the case of high sediment levels, if found necessary by Bureau of Environmental Regulation and Management of the Public Utilities Commission, the contractor may be required to install and maintain sediment traps in local stormwater intakes during the construction period to reduce the amount of sediment entering the combined sewer system. The project sponsor would obtain a permit for discharge of groundwater produced during construction dewatering to the City's combined storm and sanitary sewer from the San Francisco Department of Public Works in accordance with the City's Industrial Waste Ordinance (Public Works Code, Article 4.1).

After construction, seepage to the basement levels of the proposed structure could occur, and sump pumps could be required to keep the basement dry (as is the case at the nearby City Hall, Opera House, and the Veterans' Building). Discharge of pumpage from the sump pumps would also be subject to the City's Industrial Waste Ordinance (Public Works Code, Article 4.1). Because the site is already covered by impervious surfaces, groundwater recharge would not be affected by the project. The groundwater in

the project area is not considered suitable for potable uses due to the extent of historic industrial and manufacturing land uses in the area.

In light of the above, the project would not result in a significant effect related to water, and no further analysis of water resources is required in the EIR.

11) Energy/Natural Resources – Could the project:    Yes    No    Discussed

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| (a) Encourage activities which result in the use of large amounts of fuel, water, or energy, or use these in a wasteful manner? | — | X | X |
| (b) Have a substantial effect on the potential use, extraction, or depletion of a natural resource?                             | — | X | — |

The project would meet current state and local codes concerning energy consumption. It would not cause a wasteful use of energy. Therefore, energy consumption requires no further analysis; the effect would not be significant, and this topic will not be discussed in the EIR.

12) Hazards – Could the project:    Yes    No    Discussed

- |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| (a) Create a potential public health hazard or involve the use, production or disposal of materials which pose a hazard to people or animal or plant populations in the area affected? | — | X | X |
| (b) Interfere with emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans?   | — | X | X |
| (c) Create a potentially substantial fire hazard?  | — | X | X |

A Phase I environmental site assessment has been performed for the project site and is summarized here.<sup>17</sup> The existing building has not been surveyed for hazardous building materials including asbestos, lead-based paint, and PCB-containing electrical equipment. However, the building is known to have asbestos-containing building materials that must be removed prior to demolition.

## Asbestos

Section 19827.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, adopted January 1, 1991, requires that local agencies not issue demolition permits until an applicant has demonstrated compliance with notification requirements under applicable federal regulations regarding hazardous air pollutants, including asbestos. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) is vested by the California legislature with

<sup>17</sup> Orion Environmental Associates, "Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, 525 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, CA," prepared for Environmental Science Associates, July 10, 1998. This report is on file at the San Francisco Planning Department, 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, Project File No. 97.478E.

authority to regulate airborne pollutants, including asbestos, through both inspection and law enforcement, and is to be notified ten days in advance of any proposed demolition. Notification includes the names, addresses and phone numbers of operations and persons responsible, including the contractor; description and location of the structure to be renovated/demolished including size, age and prior use, and the approximate amount of friable asbestos; scheduled starting and completion dates of demolition; nature of planned work and methods to be employed; procedures to be employed to meet BAAQMD requirements; and the name and location of the waste disposal site to be used. The BAAQMD randomly inspects removal operations. In addition, the BAAQMD inspects any removal operations concerning a complaint it has received.

The local office of the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal-OSHA) must be notified if asbestos abatement is to be carried out. Asbestos abatement contractors must follow state regulations contained in 8 CCR 1529 and 8 CCR 341.6 through 341.14 where there is asbestos-related work involving 100 square feet or more of asbestos-containing material. Asbestos removal contractors must be certified as such by the Contractors Licensing Board of the State of California. The owner of the property where abatement would occur must have a Hazardous Waste Generator Number assigned by, and registered with, the California Department of Health Services. The contractor and the hauler of the material are required to file a Hazardous Waste Manifest that details the hauling of the material from the site and the disposal of the material. Pursuant to California law, the Department of Building Inspection would not issue the required permit until the applicant has complied with the notice requirements above.

These regulations and procedures, already established and enforced as part of the permit review process, would ensure that any potential impacts due to asbestos would be reduced to a level of insignificance. Therefore, no further mitigation is required.

## **Lead-Based Paint**

Lead paint may be found in the existing building, constructed in 1959 and proposed for demolition as part of the project. Construction and demolition activities must comply with Chapter 36 of the San Francisco Building Code, Work Practices for Exterior Lead-Based Paint. Where there is any work that may disturb or remove lead paint on the exterior of any building built prior to December 31, 1978, Chapter 36 requires specific notification and work standards, and identifies prohibited work methods and penalties.

Chapter 36 applies to buildings or steel structures on which original construction was completed prior to 1979 (which are assumed to have lead-based paint on their surfaces), where more than ten total square feet of lead-based paint would be disturbed or removed. The ordinance contains performance standards, including establishment of containment barriers that are at least as effective at protecting human health and the environment as those in the most recent *Guidelines for Evaluation and Control of Lead-Based Paint Hazards* promulgated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The ordinance also identifies prohibited practices that may not be used in disturbance or removal of lead-based paint. Any person performing work subject to the ordinance shall make all reasonable efforts to prevent migration of lead paint contaminants beyond containment barriers during the course of the work, and any

person performing regulated work shall make all reasonable efforts to remove all visible lead paint contaminants from all regulated areas of the property prior to completion of the work.

The ordinance includes notification requirements, contents of notice, and requirements for signs. Notification includes notifying bidders for the work of any paint-inspection reports verifying the presence or absence of lead-based paint in the regulated area of the proposed project. Prior to commencement of work, the responsible party (owner or contractor) must provide written notice to the Director of Building Inspection of the location of the project; the nature and approximate square footage of the painted surface being disturbed and/or removed; anticipated job start and completion dates for the work; whether the responsible party has reason to know or presume that lead-based paint is present; whether the building is residential or non-residential, owner-occupied or rental property; the approximate number of dwelling units, if any; the dates by which the responsible party has or will fulfill any tenant or adjacent property notification requirements; and the name, address, telephone number, and pager number of the party who will perform the work. (Further notice requirements include Sign When Contaminant is Required, Notice by Landlord, Required Notice to Tenants, Availability of Pamphlet related to protection from lead in the home, Notice by Contractor, Early Commencement of Work [by Owner, Requested by Tenant], and Notice of Lead Contaminated Dust or Soil, if applicable.) The ordinance contains provisions regarding inspection and sampling, and enforcement, and describes penalties for non-compliance with the requirements of the ordinance.

The project must also comply with California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) Lead Construction Standards (Title 8, Section 1532.1), the California Department of Health Services (DHS) Lead Work Practice Standards, and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) requirements for demolition activities. DHS requires a lead hazard evaluation for both the interior and exterior of the building. Lead-containing paints that are not well adhered (loose and peeling) to building surfaces must be removed and disposed of as hazardous waste. Lead-based paints that are well adhered to building surfaces do not need to be abated prior to demolition and can be disposed of along with non-hazardous demolition debris (the concentration of lead, by volume, would not be substantial for paint that remains adhered).

Under the Cal/OSHA rules, lead-based paint stabilization (removal of deteriorated lead based paint) would need to be conducted by DHS-certified workers under controlled procedures. Workers would be required to be monitored for lead exposure and to wear protective equipment. During demolition, dust control procedures in accordance with the BAAQMD should be implemented to minimize the potential for lead dust hazards to the public and surrounding land uses.

These regulations and procedures would ensure that potential impacts due to lead-based paint would be reduced to a level of insignificance. Therefore, no further mitigation is required.

## **Other Potential Hazardous Materials**

Other potential hazardous building materials such as PCB-containing electrical equipment, hydraulic oils, fluorescent lights, stored chemicals, or two existing above-ground storage tanks could pose health threats

for demolition workers but would be mitigated by building surveys and abatement as necessary (see Mitigation, p. 32). The existing building contains elevators. Elevators may be operated by hydraulic oils; in the past, some of these oils contained PCBs. Mitigation is included in the project to reduce impacts of hazardous building materials (see p. 32).

Operation of the new City Administrative Building could potentially involve the use of hazardous substances, including diesel for a back up power generator as well as maintenance and cleaning chemicals. The project sponsor would comply with Article 21 of the San Francisco Municipal Code, enforced by the San Francisco Department of Public Health, as well as applicable state and additional local requirements for the storage of petroleum products and the use of hazardous substances during operation of the office building. Compliance with these regulations would provide a high level of public health protection, and therefore no long-term public health impacts would be anticipated.

## **Soil and Groundwater**

A computerized regulatory database search was conducted to identify known or potential off-site sources of hazardous materials. All of the sites reviewed are considered to have a low potential to affect soil or groundwater quality at the project site.

## **Evacuation and Emergency Response**

Occupants of the proposed building would contribute to congestion if an emergency evacuation of the downtown area were required. Section 12.201(e)(1) of the San Francisco Fire Code requires that all owners of high-rise buildings (over 75 feet) "shall establish or cause to be established procedures to be followed in case of fire or other emergencies." Emergency response or evacuation plans for the Civic Center and downtown areas would not be expected to be affected by the proposed project because the project would essentially relocate City employees from within the greater Civic Center area. However, an evacuation and emergency response plan would be developed by the project sponsor to insure coordination between the City's emergency planning activities and the project's plan to provide for building occupants in the event of an emergency. The project's plan would be reviewed by the Department of Building Inspection and the Fire Department prior to the issuance of occupancy permits. Additionally, project construction would have to conform to the provisions of the Building and Fire Codes that require additional life-safety protections for high-rise buildings.

As a result of implementing the regulations summarized above, all potential health and safety issues related to building contamination, soil contamination and remediation, and emergency procedures would be reduced to a level of insignificance by mitigation measures included in the project, or would be regulated by current laws and regulations; these issues do not require further analysis and will not be discussed in the EIR.

13) Cultural – Could the project:      Yes      No      Discussed

- |  |           |          |           |
|--|-----------|----------|-----------|
| (a) Disrupt or adversely affect a prehistoric or historic archaeological site or a property of historic or cultural significance to a community or ethnic or social group; or a paleontological site except as a part of a scientific study? | <u>  </u> | <u>X</u> | <u>X</u>  |
| (b) Conflict with established recreational, educational, religious or scientific uses of the area?   | <u>  </u> | <u>X</u> | <u>  </u> |
| (c) Conflict with the preservation of buildings subject to the provisions of Article 10 or Article 11 of the City Planning Code?   | <u>  </u> | <u>X</u> | <u>X</u>  |

## Archaeological Resources

*Cultural Resources*<sup>18</sup> – In its natural setting, the project site was situated atop a rise, overlooking lower land on all sides. The sandy soils in and around this area supported a sparse covering of vegetation, mainly grasses, scrub brush and occasional stands of oak trees. Prior to European settlement, Native American activity may have occurred in the area, as the marshes of Mission Bay and the shoreline of Yerba Buena Cove, two known areas of Native American habitation, were each less than one mile away. In recent years, a number of prehistoric sites have been recorded, including the BART Civic Center station and at two sites South of Market. During the Spanish and Mexican Periods (1776-1845), it is unlikely that there was any regular activity on the project site or its immediate vicinity, as Mission Dolores and the Presidio, the principal centers of activity, were located some two and three miles, respectively, from the site. However, the gradual growth of the village of Yerba Buena (later renamed San Francisco in 1847), particularly during the first few years of American control (after 1846), could have led to some transitory activity in the project vicinity.

The first recorded use of the project site, a lone structure, was included in the 1869 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey map of San Francisco. During the late 1860s and early 1870s, systematic grading around the present-day Civic Center Plaza began and settlement increased, but for the most part, the project site developed very slowly. The next recorded use of the project site appears on the 1887 Sanborn Insurance Company's map which shows approximately three-quarters of the block bounded by

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<sup>18</sup> An archaeological resources report titled “Archival Cultural Resources Evaluation of the Proposed Main Library Development Project and Two Affiliated Parcels in the Civic Center Plaza Area, San Francisco, California,” was prepared by Allen G. Pastron, Ph.D. of Archeo-Tec, Inc., in November 1990 (revised November 1991) and is on file at the Office of Environmental Review, Department of City Planning, 450 McAllister Street, San Francisco. That report includes the project site and is summarized here, with material also included from the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment referenced in Note 17.

Van Ness Avenue, Golden Gate Avenue, Polk Street and McAllister Street occupied by eight row houses or duplexes, set back slightly from the street, with commercial establishments along Locust (now Redwood) Street and at the corner of McAllister and Polk Streets. The 1899 edition of the Sanborn map revealed no change on the site, but increased development on the southern portion of the block, which remained essentially unchanged until 1906 when it was completely destroyed during the Great Earthquake and subsequent fires. After 1906, the block took on a different character as it was rebuilt. The 1913 Sanborn Insurance Company map shows that the half-block north of Redwood Street, including the project site was devoted to automobile sales while the southern section was largely undeveloped. These auto-related uses were housed in single-story buildings of wood framing and masonry. By 1948, the project site had been cleared for use as a parking lot.

The site remained a parking lot until 1954. Construction of the existing office building was completed by 1959. Tenants of the office building have included the State Compensation Insurance Fund and the California Department of Industrial Relations. The office building was vacated after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and has remained vacant since 1989.

Because the existing building contains a basement, and because limited excavation is proposed as part of the project, it is unlikely that subsurface cultural resources would be disturbed. A mitigation measure is included in the project to reduce to a level of insignificance any potential impacts to subsurface cultural resources should such resources be encountered during the limited excavation (see p. 33). No further discussion of subsurface cultural resources will be included in the EIR.

## **Historic Architectural Resources**

The existing 525 Golden Gate building was constructed in 1959 and is not rated in any known architectural surveys. The site is adjacent to nationally and locally designated historic districts. As described in Section III.B.2, p. 12, the new City Administrative Building would be taller than the San Francisco Civic Center Courthouse, across Redwood Street from the project site, and the new State Office Building, across Polk Street. As such, the new building would be clearly visible from Civic Center Plaza and from other areas within the Civic Center historic districts. The City Administrative Building would be at the northwestern corner of the Civic Center, and would be partially screened from view by the State Office Building in longer range views of City Hall from the east (as from United Nations Plaza and Fulton Street between the new Main Library and Old Main Library building). As such, the City Administrative Building would not visually compete with City Hall, the principal focus of the historic districts, in such a way as to substantially diminish City Hall's prominence. Nor would the new building block views of City Hall or the Civic Center, except views from a limited area to the north along Polk Street, where existing views are partially obstructed by the Phillip Burton Federal Building, the new Civic Center Courthouse, and other structures; the northern edge of Civic Center is largely obscured from view at present. Construction of the new City Administrative Building would not alter any of the features of the Civic Center area that qualify it for listing on the National Register as a historic district, or that were cited in the designating ordinance under Article 10 of the Planning Code. Thus, the project would not adversely affect the historic districts, either directly or indirectly. In light of the above,

effects on historic architectural resources would not be significant, and no further discussion of historic architectural resources will be included in the EIR.

C. OTHER	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Discussed</u>
Require approval and/or permits from City Departments other than Planning Department or Department of Building Inspection, or from Regional, State, or Federal Agencies?	—	X	—
D. MITIGATION MEASURES	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>N/A</u>
1) Could the project have significant effects if mitigation measures are not included in the project?	X	—	X
2) Are all mitigation measures necessary to eliminate significant effects included in the project?	—	To Be Determined	—

The following are mitigation measures related to topics determined to require no further analysis in the EIR. The EIR will contain a mitigation chapter describing these measures, which are proposed as part of the project, and also including other measures which would be, or could be, adopted to reduce potential adverse effects of the project identified in the EIR.

#### **Construction Noise**

- If pile driving is required for the project foundation, the project sponsor will require the project engineer to include in foundation plans submitted to the Department of Building Inspection for review that piles be pre-drilled to the extent feasible, unless a soils report indicates that soil conditions are such that pre-drilling would reduce the effectiveness of the pile foundation.

#### **Construction Air Quality**

- The project sponsor would require the contractor(s) to sprinkle exterior demolition sites with water during demolition, excavation and construction activity; sprinkle unpaved exterior construction areas with water at least twice per day; cover stockpiles of soil, sand, and other material; cover trucks hauling debris, soil, sand or other such material; and sweep surrounding streets during demolition and construction at least once per day to reduce particulate emissions. Ordinance 175-91, passed by the Board of Supervisors on May 6, 1991, requires that non-potable water be used for dust control activities. Therefore, the project sponsor would require that the contractor(s) obtain reclaimed water from the Clean Water Program for this purpose.

#### **Hazards**

- The project sponsor would ensure that building surveys for PCB-containing equipment (including elevator equipment), hydraulic oils, and fluorescent lights are performed prior to the start of demolition. Any hazardous materials so discovered would be abated according to federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

## Cultural Resources

- Given the archival history of the project site, the project sponsor would retain an historical archaeologist, who would be present during site excavation and would record observations in a permanent log. The Environmental Review Officer (ERO) would also require cooperation of the project sponsor in assisting such further investigations on site as may be appropriate prior to or during project excavation, even if this results in a delay in excavation activities.

Should archeological resources of potential significance be found during ground disturbance, the project sponsor would immediately notify the ERO and would suspend any excavation that the ERO determined might damage such archaeological resources. Excavation or construction activities that might damage discovered cultural resources would be suspended for a total maximum of four weeks over the course of construction.

The archaeologist would prepare a draft report containing an assessment of the potential significance of the find and recommendations for what measures should be implemented to minimize potential effects on archaeological resources. Based on this report, the ERO would recommend specific additional mitigation measures to be implemented by the project sponsor.

Mitigation measures might include a site security program, additional on-site investigations by the archaeologist, and/or documentation, preservation, and recovery of cultural materials. Finally, the archaeologist would prepare a draft report documenting the cultural resources that were discovered, an evaluation as to their significance, and a description as to how any archaeological testing, exploration and/or recovery program was conducted.

Copies of all draft reports prepared according to this mitigation measure would be sent first and directly to the ERO for review. Following approval by the ERO, copies of the final report(s) would be sent by the archaeologist directly to the President of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System. Three copies of the final archaeology report(s) shall be submitted to the Office of Environmental Review, accompanied by copies of the transmittals documenting its distribution to the President of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and the Northwest Information Center.

## E. ALTERNATIVES

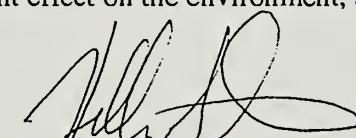
Alternatives to the proposed project will be discussed in the EIR and will include the following:

- No Project: The site would remain in its existing condition. The existing structure would remain vacant.
- Reduced Scale Alternative: This alternative would consist of demolition of the existing building and construction of a smaller new structure for use as City offices. The smaller scale building would be constructed so as to conform with the existing height limit of 130 feet, and would not require an exception from bulk requirements; a variance from the parking and loading requirements might still be required.

F.	MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Discussed</u>
1)	Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or pre-history?	—	X	—
2)	Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals?	—	X	—
3)	Does the project have possible environmental effects which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (Analyze in the light of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects.)	—	To be Determined	—
4)	Would the project cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	—	To be Determined	—

#### G. ON THE BASIS OF THIS INITIAL STUDY

- I find the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared by the Department of City Planning.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there WILL NOT be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures, numbers \_\_\_\_, in the discussion have been included as part of the proposed project. A NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- X I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.



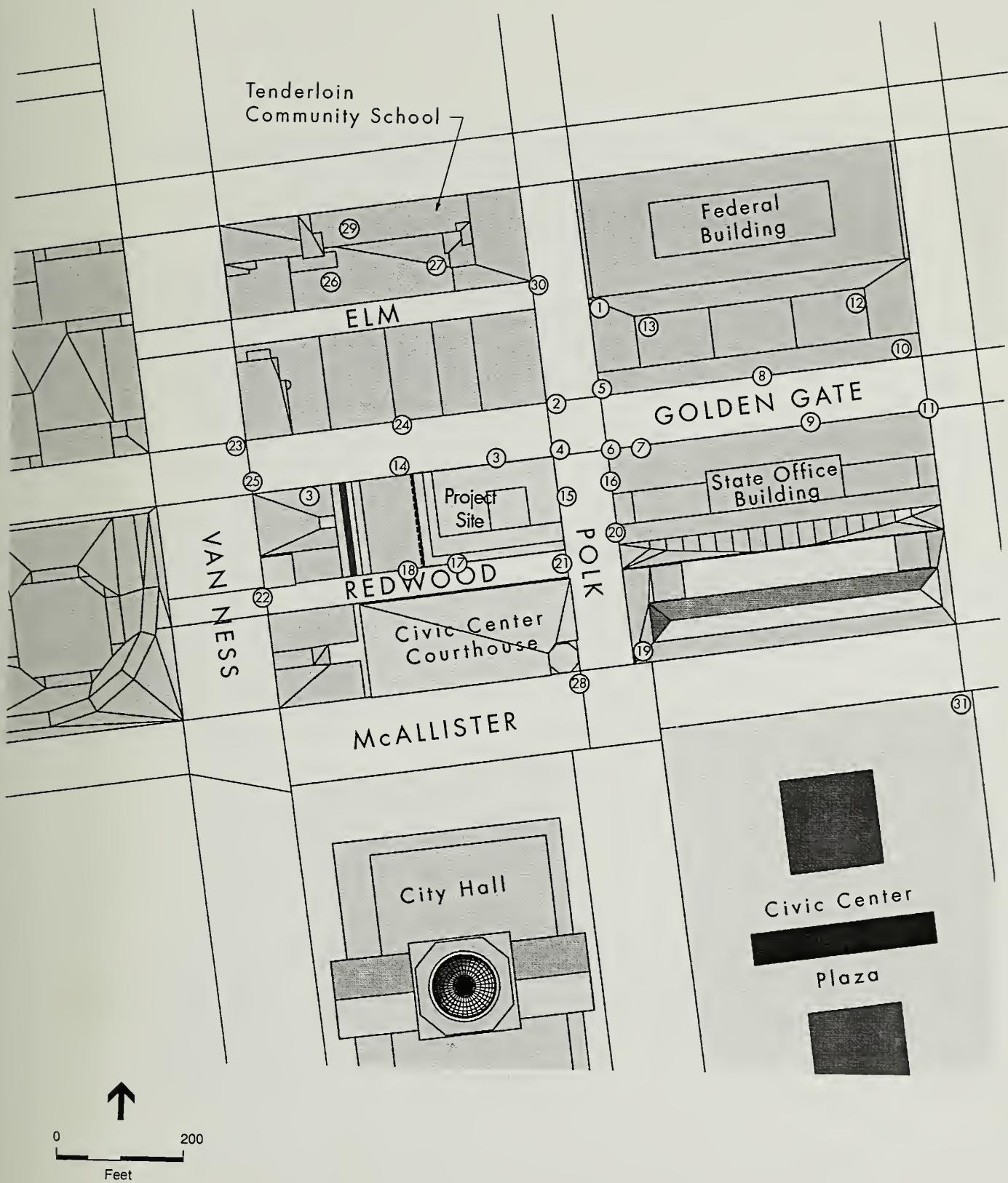
HILLARY E. GITELMAN  
Environmental Review Officer  
for

GERALD G. GREEN  
Director of Planning

DATE: September 18, 1999

## **APPENDIX B**

### **WIND ANALYSIS RESULTS**



SOURCE: Environmental Science Associates

1997.428E: S.F. City Administrative Building / ESA 960223 ■

**Figure B-1**  
Wind Point Test Locations

**Table 1 - Wind Comfort Analysis - Existing, Project and Cumulative Conditions  
Proposed 525 Golden Gate Avenue Project  
San Francisco, California  
Wind-Tunnel Test, April 28, 2000**

References		Existing			Project (Opt. A)			Project + Cumulative					
Location Number	Comfort Criterion	Measured Equivalent Wind Speed (mph)	Percent of Time Wind Speed Exceeds Criterion	e e e d	Measured Equivalent Wind Speed (mph)	Percent of Time Wind Speed Exceeds Criterion	Speed Change Relative to Existing (mph)	e e e d	Measured Equivalent Wind Speed (mph)	Percent of Time Wind Speed Exceeds Criterion	Speed Change Relative to Project (mph)	e e e d	
1	11	26	54	e	26	58		e	26	59		=	
2	11	10	6	e	12	15	2	+e	11	9	-1	-	
3	11	9	4	e	13	17	4	+e	12	12	-1	-	
4	11	12	13	e	14	20	2	+e	12	14	-2	=	
5	11	14	16	e	14	22	1	e	14	17		=	
6	11	11	9	e	12	14	2	+e	11	10	-1	=	
7	11	17	29	e	17	33	1	e	16	30	-1	=	
8	11	15	19	e	16	20		e	15	20		=	
9	11	19	34	e	19	32		e	19	33		=	
10	11	12	12	e	11	10	-1	-e	11	10		=	
11	11	14	16	e	13	15		e	12	13	-1	=	
12	11	16	28	e	17	32	1	e	18	34	1	=	
13	11	25	54	e	26	58	1	e	26	59		=	
14	11	10	8	e	13	18	3	+e	14	20	1	=	
15	11	12	14	e	10	7	-2	+e	9	5	-1	=	
16	11	11	10	e	12	12	1	+e	11	9	-1	=	
17	11	11	9	e	13	20	2	+e	13	21		=	
18	11	10	8	e	13	21	3	+e	14	21		=	
19	11	13	14	e	13	15		e	12	14	-1	=	
20	11	12	18	e	13	19	1	e	12	14	-1	=	
21	11	11	10	e	10	6	-1		10	7			
22	11	7	1	e	8	1	1		8	3			
23	11	11	11	e	11	12			11	11			
24	11	10	7	e	10	8	1		12	15	2	=	
25	11	8	2	e	8	2			9	3			
26	11	7	2	e	8	3			7	1	-1		
27	11	10	9	e	11	10			10	7	-1		
28	11	9	4	e	11	10	2		11	9			
29	11	9	6	e	9	7			9	3	-1		
30	11	15	26	e	17	32	1	e	17	32		=	
31	11	18	35	e	17	34		e	18	36		=	
Average mph / %		12.7	16%		13.5	19%	0.5		13.2	18%	-0.2		
Exceedances: Counts:		Total Existing	15 15	e	Total Existing	20 13	e	Total Prior Exceedance New, Due to Project New, at new Location	18 17 1				
								# Exceedance Eliminated	0 2	# New, at new Location	0 3	# Exceedance Eliminated	

**Table 2 - Wind Hazard Analysis - Existing, Project and Cumulative Conditions**  
**Proposed 525 Golden Gate Avenue Project**  
**San Francisco, California**  
**Wind-Tunnel Test, April 28, 2000**

References		Existing			Project (Opt. A)			Project + Cumulative			e x c e d	
Location Number	Wind Hazard Criterion Speed (mph)	Measured Equivalent Wind Speed (mph)	Hours per year Wind Speed Exceeds Hazard Criterion	e x c e d	Measured Equivalent Wind Speed (mph)	Hours per year Wind Speed Exceeds Hazard Criterion	Hours Change Relative to Setting	e x c e d	Measured Equivalent Wind Speed (mph)	Hours per year Wind Speed Exceeds Hazard Criterion	Hours Change Relative to Project	
1	36	57	259	e	57	258	-1	e	56	239	-19	=
2	36	23			20				20			
3	36	18			23				21			
4	36	27			30				25			
5	36	34			35				34			
6	36	24			28				24			
7	36	34			35				33			
8	36	36			35				36			
9	36	41	18	e	42	22	4	e	42	21	-0	=
10	36	27			23				25			
11	36	30			29				27			
12	36	37	2	e	39	5	3	e	38	3	-2	=
13	36	58	239	e	60	283	44	e	58	247	-36	=
14	36	29			28				26			
15	36	22			26				26			
16	36	27			33				29			
17	36	21			24				24			
18	36	20			24				23			
19	36	32			31				30			
20	36	29			34				31			
21	36	20			23				22			
22	36	14			14				19			
23	36	20			19				19			
24	36	29			28				29			
25	36	16			15				18			
26	36	18			19				15			
27	36	22			23				22			
28	36	19			22				23			
29	36	20			20				17			
30	36	26			28				29			
31	36	33			32				31			
Average mph / hr		27.8	518		29.1	568	49.9		28.1	511	-56.9	
Exceedances:		Total	4		Total	4			Total	4		
Counts:		Existing	4	e	Existing	4	e		Prior Exceedance	4	=	
					New, Due to Project	0		+ New, Due to Cumulative	0		+	

**Table 3 - Wind Comfort Analysis - Existing, Project and Alternative Conditions  
Proposed 525 Golden Gate Avenue Project  
San Francisco, California  
Wind-Tunnel Test, April 28, 2000**

References		Existing			Project (Opt. A)			Project (Opt. B)				
Location Number	Comfort Criterion Speed (mph)	Measured Equivalent Wind Speed (mph)	Percent of Time Wind Speed Exceeds Criterion	e	Measured Equivalent Wind Speed (mph)	Percent of Time Wind Speed Exceeds Criterion	Speed Change Relative to Existing (mph)	e	Measured Equivalent Wind Speed (mph)	Percent of Time Wind Speed Exceeds Criterion	Speed Change Relative to Project (mph)	e
1	11	26	54	e	26	58		e	26	57	-1	=
2	11	10	6	x	12	15	2	+	11	9	-1	=
3	11	9	4	c	13	17	4	+	10	7	-3	=
4	11	12	13	e	14	20	2	e	13	16	-1	=
5	11	14	16	e	14	22	1	e	14	21		=
6	11	11	9	e	12	14	2	+	12	13		=
7	11	17	29	e	17	33	1	e	16	25	-1	=
8	11	15	19	e	16	20		e	16	20		=
9	11	19	34	e	19	32		e	19	33		=
10	11	12	12	e	11	10	-1	-	10	8	-1	=
11	11	14	16	e	13	15		e	14	17	1	=
12	11	16	28	e	17	32	1	e	17	30	-1	=
13	11	25	54	e	26	58	1	e	27	58		=
14	11	10	8	e	13	18	3	+	12	13	-2	=
15	11	12	14	e	10	7	-2	-	10	8	1	=
16	11	11	10	e	12	12	1	+	13	18	1	=
17	11	11	9	e	13	20	2	+	12	12	-1	=
18	11	10	8	e	13	21	3	+	11	8	-3	=
19	11	13	14	e	13	15		e	13	15		=
20	11	12	18	e	13	19	1	e	12	15	-1	=
21	11	11	10	e	10	6	-1		12	14	3	+
22	11	7	1	e	8	1	1		7	1		=
23	11	11	11	e	11	12			11	9	-1	=
24	11	10	7	e	10	8	1		9	5	-1	=
25	11	8	2	e	8	2			8	3		=
26	11	7	2	e	8	3			8	3		=
27	11	10	9	e	11	10			11	10		=
28	11	9	4	e	11	10	2		10	6	-1	=
29	11	9	6	e	9	7			9	7		=
30	11	15	26	e	17	32	1	e	17	33		=
31	11	18	35	e	17	34		e	17	33		=
Average mph / %		12.7	16%		13.5	19%	0.5		13.2	17%	-0.3	
Exceedances:		Total	15		Total	20			Total	18		
Counts:		Existing	15	e	Existing Exceedance	13	e	Prior Exceedance	17	=		
					New, Due to Project (Δ)	7	+	New, Due to Project (Δ)	1	+		
					New, at new Location	0	#	New, at new Location	0	#		
					Exceedance Eliminated	2	-	Exceedance Eliminated	3	-		

**Table 4 - Wind Hazard Analysis - Existing, Project and Alternative Conditions**  
**Proposed 525 Golden Gate Avenue Project**  
**San Francisco, California**  
**Wind-Tunnel Test, April 28, 2000**

References		Existing			Project (Opt. A)				Project (Opt. B)				
Location Number	Wind Hazard Criterion	Measured Wind Speed (mph)	Equivalent Wind Speed (mph)	Hours per year Exceeds Hazard Criterion	e <sub>x</sub>	Measured Wind Speed (mph)	Equivalent Wind Speed (mph)	Hours per year Exceeds Hazard Criterion	e <sub>x</sub>	Measured Wind Speed (mph)	Equivalent Wind Speed (mph)	Hours per year Exceeds Hazard Criterion	e <sub>x</sub>
1	36	57	259	e	57	258	-1	e	58	286	28		
2	36	23				20				19			
3	36	18				23				17			
4	36	27				30				27			
5	36	34				35				35			
6	36	24				28				27			
7	36	34				35				34			
8	36	36				35				36			
9	36	41	18	e	42	22	4	e	44	30	8		
10	36	27				23				22			
11	36	30				29				31			
12	36	37	2	e	39	5	3	e	36	1	-4		
13	36	58	239	e	60	283	44	e	61	309	26		
14	36	29				28				27			
15	36	22				26				25			
16	36	27				33				30			
17	36	21				24				22			
18	36	20				24				21			
19	36	32				31				31			
20	36	29				34				31			
21	36	20				23				21			
22	36	14				14				13			
23	36	20				19				18			
24	36	29				28				21			
25	36	16				15				17			
26	36	18				19				19			
27	36	22				23				24			
28	36	19				22				20			
29	36	20				20				20			
30	36	26				28				29			
31	36	33				32				31			
Average mph / hr		27.8	518			29.1	568	49.9		28.0	626	58.5	
Exceedances:		Total	4			Total	4			Total	3		
Counts:		Existing	4	e		Existing Exceedance	4	e		Prior Exceedance	3		
						New, Due to Project A	0	+ New, Due to Project B			0		

# **CHAPTER IX**

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## **EIR AUTHORS AND CONSULTANTS**

### **EIR AUTHORS**

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EIR Coordinator: Bill Wycko

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Project Manager: Karl F. Heisler  
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Dewey Brown  
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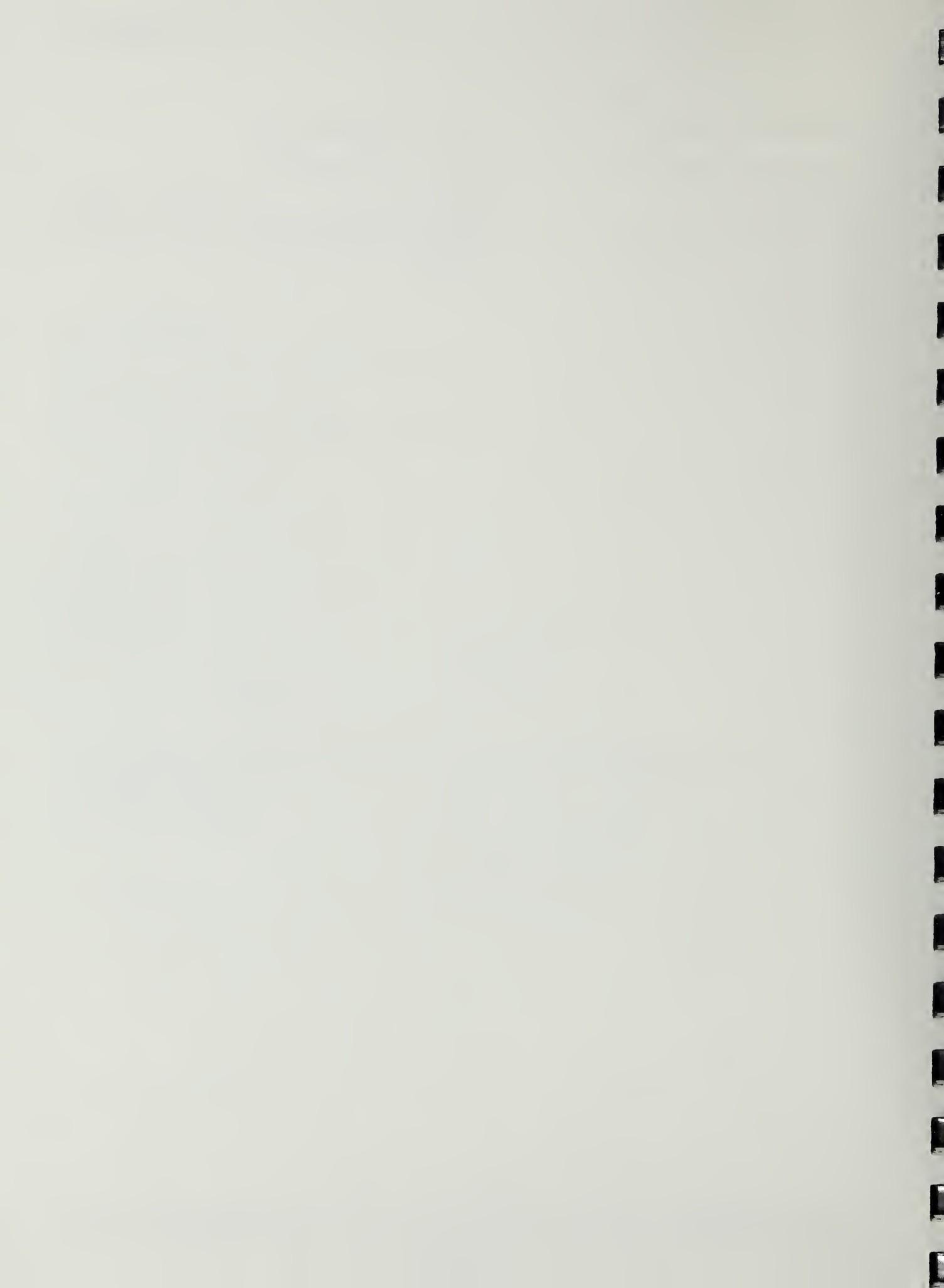
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San Francisco, California 94102  
Gary Hoy



PLACE  
POSTAGE  
HERE

San Francisco Planning Department  
Office of Major Environmental Analysis  
1660 Mission Street, 5th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Attn: Bill Wycko, EIR Coordinator  
97.478E: 525 Golden Gate Avenue Project

PLEASE CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE

RETURN REQUEST REQUIRED FOR FINAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

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REQUEST FOR FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

TO: San Francisco Planning Department,  
Office of Major Environmental Analysis

Please send me a copy of the Final EIR.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Your Name and Address Below

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